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THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY WITH MISCELLANIES FOR CANDIDATES

J. W. KIMBALL.

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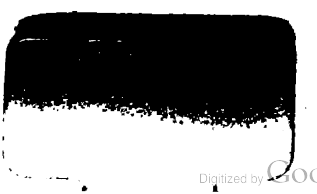

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THE

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

MISCELLANIES FOR CANDIDATES

FROM THEIR SINCERE FRIEND AND
WELL-WISHER

JAMES WILLIAM KIMBALL

AUTHOR OF "HEAVEN," "FRIENDLY WORDS WITH FELLOW PILGRIMS," "ENCOURAGEMENTS TO FAITH," "HOW TO SEE JESUS," ETC.

BOSTON

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PREFACE.

THE candidate for the Christian Ministry will naturally take counsel with wise Christian parents, with Christian teachers, with fellow-pupils, with any of his friends who win his confidence and command his respect.

If himself thoughtful, it will occur to him that in the world about him are many men of many minds. In estimating the worth of their views as to his own thought of the ministry, it may occur to him to consider whether he finds in himself any approach to what seems to recommend the ministry to his adviser. Thus one man glories in the pulpit as a stage for the orator; he loves the honor which comes from man. Applause is sweet to him. Another loves his ease. In his view the ministry will foster his preference for mental over bodily labor. Still another likes to lead and not to follow. He likes to direct and sway the public mind.

To his first disciples Jesus said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." It was for this He called them. It is for this He still calls men. If candidates for the Ministry of Salvation are not called to win their fellows to Christ; to be ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech men

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by them, praying them in Christ's stead, "Be ye reconciled to God," it does not appear that candidates for something quite unlike this are called of Jesus to *His* ministry. St. Paul says: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery," [or the mysterious fellowship] "which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."

It is safe for the man who has not an insatiable desire to win souls to Christ, to infer that he is not called of God to the Ministry of Salvation. Are you doing your best to save souls now? Said the angel to Joseph: "Mary shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Of Jesus, said Isaiah: "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."

St. Paul says to his pupils, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Candidates for the Christian Ministry, consider Jesus' question: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

J. W. K.,

21 Somerset Street, Boston.

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THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

I ESTEEM the office of the Christian Ministry to be the most honorable, the most exalted, and, under favoring circumstances, the most enviable on earth. Its work is to unite earth to heaven, man to God. No sane and Christian man, therefore, can contemplate its functions without the most sincere and earnest solicitude that its conditions of usefulness and happiness should be thoroughly understood.

Candidates for this ministry come from an endless variety of surroundings, prompted by not less various and divers motives and impulses. Some are persuaded "by the mercies of God," some "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, ambassadors for Christ, to persuade men to be reconciled to God. Some are persuaded by their discovered facility in thinking, in speaking, and in winning men to oneness of thought and feeling with

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themselves. The honor generally accorded to eloquent speakers, and the social position assigned them, has a strong attraction for not a few. There are many who have no inclination for secular business, who are conscious of neither genius nor aptitude for money-making, to whom the possibility of earning a livelihood in connection with mental cultivation, and the amassing of stores of learning, is very inviting. Again there are those who, wherever they are, aspire to be leaders, and are intolerant of being led; men who like to have their own way in everything, who think they see in the Christian Ministry free scope for their aspirations.

Those who are looking to the ministry under such promptings, would do well to heed the history of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, whose ambitious and self-seeking aspirations for the priesthood provoked the indignation of God. It may well admit of serious question if it is safe for any man to adventure himself among the temptations of the ministry, who has not been fortified at every point by the diligent and loving study of the Bible, and by the counsels and Scriptural instructions of godly parents, whose prayers are perpetually wrapping him as a garment and covering him with shield and buckler.

No man has any right to the Christian Ministry whose soul is not full to overflowing with love to Christ. It is the spring to every effort; it is the key to every human heart. It is more than logic, more than rhetoric, more than Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.

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"For though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not this divine love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." This love of Christ does not disdain the aid of any science; but it subordinates every science to the one grand work of honoring Christ.

No man has any call to the Christian Ministry who has not a passion for saving souls. If his love to Christ lacks this seal it is a fatal lack. How dwelleth the love of God in that man whose care for the souls for whom Christ died is overshadowed by intellectual ambition? Who dares pretend love for Christ, who has taken the pulpit as a theatre for intellectual display? or as the post of greatest honor? or as the most available means of earning a livelihood?

No man has any business to be in the Christian Ministry who has not distinctly and unqualifiedly renounced self in every form. It was well said by Dr. Johnson, when urged to accept a pastoral charge on the ground that the remuneration was considerable, and the duties easy: "No man, sir, has any right to make those duties easy."

If any man has a call to the Christian Ministry who has little or no vital union to his fellow-men of affection, sympathy, and thorough understanding of them, let him, if he can, prove it. What! a man take upon himself the momentous task of turning to the Holy God those who are bound hand and foot, mind and heart, body and soul, in the snares of the devil? or

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walking in all the illusions and vain show of Vanity Fair! — a man who has no hold by intimate knowledge, profound compassion, tender sympathy, and heart-yearning — shall such a man offer himself as a minister of God to the souls of men? Is he prepared to compete for them with the emissaries of Satan? Will he throw down the gauntlet to principalities and powers, and defy the rulers of wickedness in high places?

No man has any call to the Christian Ministry who has not intelligently and with all his heart received the Holy Ghost; who is not filled with the Spirit; conscious of His presence as of the indwelling personal friend Jesus declared He should be; conscious, too, of His fulfilling to himself the promise to "show him the things of God and of Christ, and to lead him unto all truth."

No man has any call to the ministry of salvation who does not rely upon the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit; who does not love it far more than all riches; to whom it is not far "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb"; who cannot say with entire truth, "My soul breaketh for the longing it hath unto thy judgments at all times." No man is fit to be in the Christian Ministry whose natural cowardice is not vanquished by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; who fears the face of man. Let me not be misunderstood. Burke said well, "No man who has not respect enough for his audience sometimes to tremble before them, will ever make a true orator.

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There is no want of brute insensibility; there are men enough in and out of the ministry, who neither fear God nor regard man. These ought not to be mistaken for models of courage; nor is it likely that they often will be, for their stupendous self-conceit is known and read of all men. But there is a fear of man engendered by pitiful concern to please man rather than God; to please man, rather than to benefit him. The man whose call to the Christian Ministry is unequivocally of God, is lifted above such fear.

It may well be doubted if many men are called to the Christian Ministry whose gift is only for theological disquisition. It is just here that ministerial insensibility to the changes which have been going on among men becomes painfully apparent. When I was a boy men bought and sold merchandise in a leisurely way, with grave and courtly mien, not unbecoming Abraham, "sitting in the door of his tent," or of "Jacob, leaning upon the top of his staff." Every movement was moderate, and the days were long, because the hours were more than enough to contain all that was to be done in them. The men really driven by their work were very few in number. It cost but little to live, and that little was not difficult of acquisition. With the increase of our population there has come increased labor, greatly increased expenses, and diminished remuneration. This necessitates not only increased diligence, but also greater executive ability; and the powers of all the

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business community are now taxed to the utmost. The current of life runs fast; the march of common life does not keep time with the measured movement and rounded periods of mere scholarly writing.

Men disciplined and developed by the pressure of business life, every nerve keyed up to the greatest tension, every capacity to do and to suffer developed to the full by ceaseless competition and frequent collision with the sharpest, shrewdest, most untiring of their fellows, cannot rationally be expected to come into the Lord's house on Sabbath morning and be interested, converted, edified, and sanctified by essays, treatises, or theological disquisitions wherein it is attempted to be shown under four heads and six inferences that the way of transgressors is hard; that sin is evil; that holiness is good, and religion rational.

It has come about that a successful and happy ministry is rather the exception than the rule. Now why is this? May not the answer be, Because the candidate does not honor as he might and ought, God's two commands: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself?" He does not truly, heartily, and entirely, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," for himself and for others. In other words, the main hindrance is the want of piety.

There are many theories of preaching, some better than others; but the vital principle, superior to all

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theories, is condensed by Jude into a few lines: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God." A vigorous growing piety towards God and man opens the way to certain success in the ministry, and nothing else will.

The man who is filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit, taught by the Spirit, will certainly overcome his natural indolence, temper, pride, vanity, ambition, and covetousness. Preferring truth to self, and the will of God to his own will, he will certainly find the truth, and his true sphere; for God is faithful, and He has promised, "Ask and ye shall receive." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." "The Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and guide you into all truth."

It may be true that one minister would have succeeded better than he has, if his education had been more thorough, his temper more even, his manners more conciliating, or his church members more active, or more liberal; but he who seeks the reasons of failure in the ministry in any of these, assuredly does not search out the ultimate cause. In mercy to his minister's own soul, God has placed the element of success where it can be reached by all whom He has called to it, the learned and the unlearned, the refined and the rude, the schoolman and the self-taught: *it is in the power of godliness.*

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Look over the catalogue of the ministers of your acquaintance: do you find that the man of most learning, genius, or taste; the greatest mathematician, logician, or rhetorician, is invariably or generally the most successful in his ministry? Are there not many instances of success among those who are palpably deficient in many of these particulars? So many that some have not been slow to draw the most mistaken inference, that learning is necessarily a hindrance to godliness, and to an efficient ministry.

The simple truth of the matter is, God has given to each man severally, talents as He will; to one logic, to another rhetoric, imagination, language, wit, pathos, originality, whatever characterizes the individual, and with these gifts, the command, "Occupy till I come." Each man who is willing to prefer the Divine order to all human theories, can and should occupy his talents to the very best purpose, and each one is capable of distinguished success, as God estimates success.

Admit that God has given to a few individuals the ability to instruct and edify the Church by a series of original and labored disquisitions; is this a common gift? Are all men, or the larger part of men, so circumstanced and so educated as to take the greatest benefit from such labors? Assuredly not; but a perverted community doting of questions beyond its comprehension, has set up this standard, and of late years called upon all people to fall down

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and worship this image. Let us hope that our God is able to deliver us from the furnace of contempt with which we are threatened if we refuse to do homage to this idol.

The simple Word of God is grievously neglected in many pulpits, or less honored than it might be. The extemporaneous teaching of the Holy Ghost is not counted on as it should be. Neither studious men, nor other men, expect that God will give them in the hour of need what He wishes them to speak. Such aid, not a few will tell you, was granted to the first disciples only because they were without the means of education now enjoyed. It is rare to find a man who does not depend more upon the methods of the schools than upon the promptings of the Comforter. It is rare to find the man who, like Payson, makes you feel that he is filled with faith and with the Holy Ghost, that he is swayed and controlled by the love of God; that he is inspired from Heaven. If our discourses have gained in what is called literary ability, have they not, confessedly, lost in unction? Where is the minister who makes you feel the moment he opens his lips, truly his fellowship is with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Where is the minister who reads the Bible as if he were inspired? — as if like Stephen he saw the Heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Where is the minister prepared to go into the pulpit every Sabbath day in the year and open the Scriptures, as Christ did to the disciples at Emmaus, with a fervor

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and an enthusiasm, and a copiousness of illustration, supplied by an habitual spiritual-mindedness, which never for an instant doubts, never has reason to doubt, of an intensely interested and an immeasurably profited congregation?

Steam and electricity are often referred to, as illustrating our enlarged physical resources; they ought also to serve as reminders of the accelerated movement of the minds and hearts around us; and the ministers of Christ should see to it that our spiritual movements, for speed and for power, do not suffer by comparison with the greatest marvels in natural science. Let the power of the Holy Ghost be fully recognized, truly valued, and cordially invoked, and our spiritual progress will certainly transcend all other. Let the minister no longer go into the pulpit sustaining himself with the feeling, "I am an educated minister, this is my pulpit, these are my people, and bound to give me patient audience;" but rather let him feel, "I am anointed of God to reach these hearts, and to pour His word upon them, and that I will do: I long to impart unto them some spiritual gift, and as God is true and gracious to all who strive to serve Him, I certainly will impart to them such gifts this day." Let no man mistake unbelief in the promises of God for a becoming modesty.

Most certainly it is true that all things are not possible to any one man; therefore it belongs to each man to find out his own possibilities. It is

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precisely because of remissness at this point, that many men are disappointed, disheartened, and unhappy in their ministry. Oh, how many men lose their time, lose their patience, lose their piety, pulling at the wrong string, presuming that their possibilities and capabilities were all marshalled under the forming influence of the customary routine in the divinity school. Greek and Hebrew, the History of the Church, the several systems of theology, the cardinal doctrines, and the customary defences of the faith, the rules of logic and of rhetoric, they are familiar with them all; they have heard what could be said by many and able professors on the prominent points in the several departments of sacred science, and this, it appears to them, is undeniably due preparation for the ministry of salvation.

Be it observed, this is not the sweeping statement that all men fall into this mistake; but only the general proposition; here is a mistake into which some men are liable to fall; a mistake into which some will inevitably fall, if not duly warned. We are not to be understood as discourteously intimating that our theological teachers have failed to sound the note of warning. But we may, without discourtesy, affirm, that the reluctance of man to admit unwelcome truth being what it is, the reverberation of that note from without the halls of divinity will be useful.

The foundation of all usefulness and happiness in the ministry must lie in a conscious power and

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delight in affecting other minds. There must be in every effective and useful minister actual superiority of some sort. Men will not long endure, much less sustain, any man whom they do not respect. Whence it follows that no man has a call to the ministry who has not some actual superiority; some power beneficially to affect other minds. But men may and do fail in the ministry who have actual superiority and power to affect other minds, in consequence of not knowing wherein their strength lies. It is not that they have not ability, but that they mistake their vocation. Does the supposition seem to you inadmissible? It should not; for, in truth, there are many Christian men who, in point of seeking Divine guidance, seem, like the Ephesians, not so much as to have heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. It is not their habit with simple-hearted faith, to accept the assurance that the Holy Ghost dwells with them and in them, for the very purpose of guiding them into all truth. Thence their mistakes.

Of course there is a line of effort, in which every man who is called of God to be His minister can excel. What that line is, he is bound to know, and may learn by asking; for God says explicitly, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

In order to a more intelligent survey of some of the prominent distinctive ways of working in the

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ministry, let it be considered, that it is our first and paramount concern to gain a perfectly clear conception of the true work of the Christian Ministry. It is safe to begin with God's own designation; it is "the ministry of reconciliation." This implies alienation. It is certain that man does not love and obey God. The aim is to bring man to love and obey Him; and to achieve this through the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the work of the Christian Ministry, and the man who has no passion for this, has no call to the ministry. As to the manner of doing this, the word reconciliation shall serve us. The only true and enduring reconciliation, whether of man to man, or of man to God, must be based upon the abandonment of wrong by the party in the wrong. So far as man is alienated from God, it is self-evident that the wrong is with man: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

The work of the Christian Ministry is therefore to bring man right toward God; to bring him into perfect harmony with God. Now, as to the ways of doing this, there is large liberty; they are manifold. The work is flexible to the talents of the workmen. The work is large enough for all; it accommodates itself to all who are workmen needing not to be ashamed. It does not demand that every man shall be a Paul or an Apollos; a Cephas or a John; an Edwards or a Whitefield; a Chalmers or a Rowland Hill; a Doddridge or a Spurgeon; a Wilberforce or

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a Harlan Page. It demands only that every man shall be a man, and a full man, and his own man; and not a feeble, or exaggerated image of some other man. It demands that a man shall have sense enough, and self-knowledge enough to know for what the Lord made him; with what he has endowed him; by what he can exert a real influence upon other men.

In reconciling men to God, Edwards doubtless thought his forte lay in elaborate argument. He would prove to men by irresistible logic that they were wrong, wicked, weak, and despicable. He would prove God to be right, just, omnipotent, and admirable. And he did that.

Whitefield would not undervalue or neglect reasoning; but he would subordinate this to the great endeavor to carry the heart captive by a sudden and irresistible appeal to the imagination and to the sensibilities. He knew that he could do that, and he did it. Doddridge believed that he could unfold the Holy Scriptures in simple exposition. Spurgeon depends upon the fervid appeal in the living language of every-day life, carried home by the persuasive influence of such illustrations as belong to the observation of the million. Wilberforce could elaborate practical views in the language of a member of the English parliament. Harlan Page could attract and instruct in simple, unpretending conversation. And each of these excelled in the service of Christ, because he threw himself with energy and heartiness into his own line of effort.

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This is not to disparage, nor to undervalue the training of the schools; it is not to approve the misjudgment, indolence, or folly of those who would fain forge a specious palliation of their criminal neglect of severe study, and unsparing mental discipline. By no means! But to press the truth that God has given to each man an individuality, which rightly understood and used insures for his power to do good, the largest sphere and freest scope; and to urge that many men, because of not discerning this, have missed the true uses of the Theological School, namely to organize and marshal most effectively each man's entire resources, according just prominence to the most effective.

To the failure to discern this truth, it is in no small degree owing, that the obligation to preach the Gospel to every creature is not more generally felt.

Oh, for a love of Christ, and a labor for Christ commensurate with the increased activity of the secular world! A power of appeal not to be resisted even by those whose enterprise girdles the globe, and whose energy emulates the lightning in its passage through the sea. Surely no one can doubt that the accelerated movement in the secular world demands imperatively a much greater vivacity in the religious world; an alertness, vigor, and energy in the pulpit; and that living contact with the minds about us which is realized in earnest, animated, persuasive conversation; a style of address, not in violation of, but in

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perfect accordance and harmony with the respective endowments of each preacher.

To all this, I am quite aware that some will be saying, "Say what you will about the possibility, and even facility for some, it remains true, and probably ever will, that for not a few, it is by no means easy to talk about religion."

To be sure it is so. Religion, as you mean it, is little more than an assemblage of crude ideas of the God who made us; of the interest He may possibly take in us; of the government He may have over us; and, on our part, what we may, or must do about it. It is not easy to interest men in crude ideas; not even in well-considered abstractions. Very difficult, indeed, it is to render such matters interesting even to the well-instructed. By all means let us drop them, and talk of Jesus; of what he has done, and of what he is willing now to do for us, and for the needy all about us. For a simple, unpretending, loving follower of Jesus, it surely is not difficult to talk about his Lord; not if he loves ardently and follows closely. Old habits of thought, feeling and talking, are to be surmounted of course. Each day's progress will smooth the way to greater progress on the morrow; and ere long he will be shouting with David, "How precious, also, are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" It is not difficult to listen to such a preacher. On the contrary, every ear is attentive; and every spiritual pastor is eager to promote the utterances of young

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converts. Why? Is it that they know more than older disciples? No; but it is that the heart of the newly converted has been reached and changed; and that in the freshness of his young love his heart proclaims the Saviour and the Prince he has found. The love of such an one is contagious. It is no theologic dogma, no system of philosophy he is eager to introduce, it is the friendship of Jesus, which has become so much to himself, that he must and will share it with others.

To preach, then, is to get the ear, the understanding, and the heart for Jesus. With reason we are wont to say, "It is to speak for Jesus;" but we cannot forget that it is not the tongue alone which speaks for Jesus. Every one feels the eloquence of the unlettered woman, who could give no connected account of what the Lord had done for her; about to be declined by those to whom she could not make herself intelligible, nor interpret the transformation which she alleged to have taken place, she broke out in the simple declaration, "I cannot talk for Him, but I can die for Him." To die daily unto ambition, pride, vanity, self-seeking, sin in any and every form, in order to be every whit alive to Jesus and His cause; this is to preach Him to every creature. To pray ceaselessly, inexorably, to be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, that you may be fruitful in every good work, increasing in the knowledge of

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God, strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness, giving thanks unto the Father who has made you meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints of light, who hath delivered you from the power of darkness, and hath translated you into the kingdom of his dear son; this is to have accepted a full salvation, and a present heaven, dwelling in which, you cannot but know both the power and the rest of faith; in virtue of which you have great freedom to lose all undue concern about yourself, and to be absorbed in undistracted devotion to Jesus and His cause.

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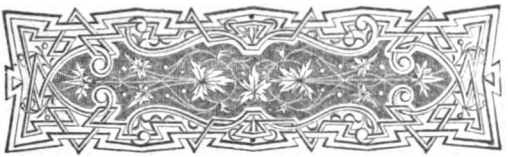

II.

IS THE RELIGIOUS WANT OF THE AGE MET?

TO answer this question intelligently, we must first glance at the characteristics of the age. It is an age of remarkable activity. There have been industrious men in other days; there have been nations of whom it might be truly said, They were an industrious people, they lost no time in idleness: but their rate of speed was low. Such a people could hardly be deemed enterprising. They might continue uncomplainingly in their accustomed round of labors, but would lack impulse to attempt anything new. Circumstances did not compel them to unwonted efforts, and their capabilities lay dormant. The world was wide, the population comparatively sparse, and the means of subsistence not difficult of attainment.

Our age is very unlike to that. People begin to crowd one another. There is competition. The more active and ingenious will have the advantage; they do have the advantage; and this fact is a con-

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stant stimulus. It has been operating for thirty years past with ever-increasing power. We seem to be approaching a climax, a point beyond which flesh and blood cannot go. The enterprise of the more active spirits of our day is astounding; we begin to ask, Will they stop at anything? What will they not undertake? There are a great many unsuccessful attempts; but these are not necessarily observed, they pass quietly into obscurity, while we hasten to observe the successes, which are wonderful, and so numerous as to keep us ever on tiptoe, looking for new wonders. Having seen the railways, the magnetic telegraph, and Hoe's press, in full operation, and having been brought to accept these as a common measure of time and motion, we find ourselves indisposed for older usages. We find our age an age of daring and of doing. We are ready to discard the word *impossible* from our vocabulary; we deny that anything is the less probable because of being unprecedented. For doing new things we look about for new means, being full charged with the belief that for all worthy or desirable ends there must be adequate and available means. In this regard, it is an age of unprecedented faith, of expectation of success; and we all know the natural and necessary influence of such an expectation. Sanguine expectation lights up the fires of genius; invention is quickened for the attainment of the highest speed and the greatest momentum. In no age has there been anything to compare in

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rapidity and power of movement with the every-day achievements of this age. The relation of books to men, and the sphere assigned to books, are materially modified by the characteristics of the age. Books, as books, are no longer a charm to conjure with. The few really superior books have a wider and greater influence than ever before; while the great mass of common books have less, and pass more easily into oblivion. Good books may and must help us; but books cannot make us men of the nineteenth century, and a power in it. A thorough knowledge of the world within us, as it stands related to the world without us, is something quite different from mere book-knowledge. This is an element of influence not only not confined to the book-men, but often possessed in a transcendent degree by those whose devotion to books is altogether subordinate to other avocations. Our common-school education may be said to bring the entire people upon a common plane. We are no longer the esoteric and the exoteric; we understand our rights in the common fund of sense and truth very well. We are not very patient with those who affect to know better than ourselves what we want and what we ought to desire. Most men are exceedingly in earnest, and determined to be heard in their own cause, and well able to make themselves understood. Scribes and Pharisees compassing sea and land to make one proselyte are a good and bad type of our activity in the pursuit of our own ends.

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Innumerable and infinitely varied are the shifts employed to secure attention, to effect the sale of merchandise, and to increase income. Nor are the learned professions much behind the men of merchandise. The contest of life thickens. Competition for the fruits of labor waxes continually more fierce. Mother Earth is too moderate in her labors; the ranks of the producers suffer from desertion; the plough is forsaken; the patient ox is contemned; silence, seclusion, and meditation are a memory of the past. The world's axis is changed; there is more heat in the North. The world has advanced, in our age, from a speed of five miles an hour, to twenty or thirty, or more.

Whatever may be thought of the advantages and disadvantages accruing from these movements, there can be no question of the fact that they have greatly affected the position and the relations of speakers and hearers. The million have been driven to do so much for themselves, that they are in no little danger of jumping to the conclusion that they no longer need teachers of religion. A conclusion so fraught with mischief to the race will not be arrested by a pertinacious adhesion to modes of preaching which men under the old-time training could be made to endure, but which latter-day contrasts have rendered intolerable.

It is just here, if anywhere, that a special backwardness on the part of the clergy to meet the religious wants of the age may, without injustice or

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unkindness, be alleged. It comes about very naturally; the training of the clergy is not in harmony with the exigencies of the position they are intended to occupy. The endeavors of the preparatory schools are not to be depreciated. It is scarcely possible to say too much of the fundamental importance of thoroughness and of minute accuracy in the rudiments of learning. But that extreme zeal in this behalf has produced an unnatural divorce of the practical from the critical, it is vain to deny. The devotion to the latter, which is inaugurated in the preparatory school, is by the college inflamed to the utmost, and the young man reaches his climax when he receives the appointment of valedictorian; that is his end; he reaches it, and we may say it is the death of him. He may, indeed, enter the theological seminary, industriously resolved on more of the same supremacy; but, in most instances, the great practical ends of a Christ-like life of doing good have been already lost from his view, and the ways and means by which alone such ends can be reached have become offensive to him. The student, as he delights in calling himself, has become greatly more interested in knowledge than in the people for whom he is to use his knowledge. A certain unknown God, an idol, in short, quite unsuspected, whose name is *Critical Dignity*, is installed in his heart in the place of the Son of God. And the man endures the trials of his ministerial life under the mistaken impression that he is a martyr for Christ. He compels himself

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to be satisfied with a measure of attention to his utterances, which would content no sane and sensible man in any other department of teaching. He will tell you that it is one of the inevitable infelicities of his vocation, that to nothing are men such unwilling listeners as to religious truth; than which nothing can be more untrue; for to nothing are men so prepared to listen as to religious truth, properly presented.

In order to a more generally happy and successful prosecution of the duties of a minister of Christ, a preliminary fact requires to be considered. That a man is found or finds himself in any calling is no evidence whatever that he is fitted for that calling. This is just as true of the ministry as of any other vocation. Every man-of-business knows this. The clergy seem to us behind the age in being astonishingly blind to it. Men of business know that only a very small fraction of their number can ever attain eminent success. They know, that, in a term of twenty years, ninety-seven men in a hundred *fail.* Here and there one develops a remarkable talent for the specific business in which he is engaged. The ninety-and-nine discover that they have a weary contest to maintain with manifold contingencies and combinations which no foresight can preclude.

The application of this general truth to their profession the clergy are backward to perceive. The consequences of this backwardness are very hurtful to their interests. Because of this, we have an in-

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definite amount of puerile and undignified complaint from disappointed men, of disingenuous misrepresentation from incompetent men, who have entered upon labors they were never fitted to accomplish. Such men undertake their labors in ways that want and must want the Divine sanction; and they are tempted to ward off a just verdict of unsuitableness and of incompetency by bringing many and grievous charges against their flocks. "A mania for church-extending"; "a hankering for architectural splendor"; "or for discursive and satirical preaching"; "or for something florid or profound": these and the like imputations have been put forward, as a screen, by many an unsuccessful preacher, who failed, — simply failed, — not in selling horns or hides, shirtings or sugars, — but failed to recommend Christ and his gospel, — failed for want of head, or heart, or industry, or all three.

The man who embarks his all in hardware, drugs, or law, runs the risk of failure. If his neighbor can rise earlier, walk faster, talk faster, work harder, and hold on longer, he will get the avails that might suffice for both. This unalterable fact every business-man accepts.

Do you inquire, To what good purpose do you thrust the possibility of failure upon the attention of the candidate for the ministry? Would you utterly discourage those who are already more alive to the perils of their undertaking than we could wish them?

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We answer, It is no kindness to encourage men to enter a ministry whose inexorable requirements and whose incidental possibilities they may not look in the face. It is no kindness to represent to them that the qualities which they possess *ought* to engage attention; and that their talents will command respect, or else it will be the fault of the people.

Men go into business in the face of a possibility of failure through uncontrollable circumstances; not in defiance of an ascertainable, insuperable incompetency. They toil on, accepting adversity with such equanimity as God gives them, so long as they are permitted to believe that their misfortunes are not chargeable upon their incapacity or self-indulgence. But when it is made apparent that they are not in their proper sphere, they think it no shame to say so, to withdraw, and to apply their energies to something suited to their tastes and capabilities. And so it should be with the ministry; but as things now are, with the conception of the ministry now entertained, pride interposes to forbid the rectification of the most serious mistakes. It is a question of dignity and of scholarship; whereas it should be a question of love to God and man, and of real ability and conscious power to bring them together, — to reconcile man to God.

Our age is an age of great devotion to secular affairs, — of men who are great in the conduct of such affairs, — in every department in life. To counterbalance this, our ministry must be filled with

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an equally earnest devotion to God and salvation. In real ability our ministers ought to be not a whit behind. But ability is not necessarily scholarship; though it may, and as far as possible should, include that, and a great deal more. Let it be fully understood, once for all, that we have no disparaging remark to make of scholarship; a man must be foolish beyond expression, who pretends to argue that the highest scholarship is less than a most important and almost indispensable auxiliary to the minister of Christ. All our concern in the matter, just here, is, that it shall be fully understood that piety and real ability make the minister of Christ, and not scholarship; in the words of Augustine, "the heart makes the minister;" but we may safely assume that he meant the heart of a really able man; otherwise we can accord but a qualified respect to this remark.

The prevailing impression among the ministry appears to be, that the man who cannot write "an able doctrinal discourse" is but an inferior man, fit only to preach in an inferior place; and that it would be a great gain to the Church, if scholarship were only so general that the standard of the universities could be applied, and only Phi-Beta-Kappa men allowed to enter the ministry. No doubt, those who incline to this view are quite honest, and not unkindly in it. But those who think this grievously misunderstand the necessities of the age in which we live. Reading men know where to find better reading than can possibly be furnished by any man who

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is bound to write two sermons weekly, or even one sermon a week; and to train any corps of young men in the expectation that any considerable fraction of them will be able to win and to maintain a commanding influence in their parishes mainly by the weekly production of learned discourses is to do them the greatest injury, by cherishing expectations which never can be realized. Why do our educated men of other professions so seldom and so reluctantly contribute to the addresses in our religious assemblies? Precisely because they understand the difficulty of meeting the popular expectation which is created by the prevailing theory; a theory which demands that sermons, and not only that sermons, but also that all religious addresses, should be chiefly characterized as learned, acute, scholastic even. An Irish preacher is reported in an Edinburgh paper as saying lately, that "he had been led to think of his own preaching and of that of his brethren. He saw very few sermons in the New Testament shaped after the forms and fashion in which they had been accustomed to shape theirs. He was not aware of a sermon there, in which they had a little motto selected, upon which a disquisition upon a particular subject was hung. The sort of sermons which the people in his locality were desirous to hear were sermons delivered on a large portion of the Word of God, carrying through the ideas as the Spirit of God had done." And it is, in part at least, because of the prevailing disregard of this most reasonable

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desire, that parishes so soon weary of their ministers.

It need not discourage ministers to accept the fact that there will be failures in the ministry, — and a great many failures among those who rely for their success mainly upon the weekly production of learned disquisitions. Discouragement is not in accepting a fact that accords with all just theories of truth, but in adopting a theory which is sure to be invalidated by the almost universal experience of men in, as well as out of, the ministry. A right-minded minister *may* have many falls in struggling up his Hill of Difficulty; but the Lord will lift him up, and will save him from adding to the temperate grief proper to any measure of shortcoming the intolerable poignancy that comes of cheating by false pretences, — of assuming to do what he knows or should know that he cannot do, namely, produce any considerable number of great sermons.

Let it, then, be frankly owned, that men, very good men, very capable men, have failed in the ministry. A. failed, because he did not study; B., because he did not visit his people; C., because he could not talk; D., because he was too grave; E., because he was too frivolous; F. could not, or would not, control his temper; G. alienated by exacting more than he received; and all of them because of not having what Scougal calls "the life of God in the soul of man."

It is not worth while for any man to go into the

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ministry who cannot relish the Apostle's invitation, running thus: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies *a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." If that seem not reasonable, ay, and exceedingly inviting too, better let it alone. All men cannot do all things. Better raise extraordinary potatoes than hammer out insignificant ideas. You do not see the connection? you were a Phi-Beta-Kappa man in college, and know that you can write better than many a man in a metropolitan pulpit? Very likely; but we of the pew go to church to be made better men, and not by fine writing, but by significant ideas, which may come in a homely garb, so they be only pervaded with affectionate piety, but which can come to us only from one who has laid all ambitious self-seeking on the altar of God. There is a power of persuasion in every minister who follows God as a dear child, and who walks in love, as Christ loved us, which the hardest heart cannot long resist, — which will win the congregation, however an individual here and there may be able to harden himself against it. You think that the great power of the pulpit is in high doctrine, presented with metaphysical precision and acuteness. We have no disparagement to offer of your doctrinal knowledge, nor of your ability to state it with metaphysical precision and hair-splitting acuteness. But we know, from much experience, that there is a divine truth, and a fervor and power

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in imparting it, with which God inspires the man who is wholly devoted to Him, in comparison with which the higher achievements of the man who lacks these are trumpery and rubbish. Many, *many* men have failed in the ministry, are failing in the ministry every day, because their principal reliance has been upon what they deem their thorough mastery of the soundest theories of doctrine and of duty. They were confident they could administer to minds and hearts diseased the certain specific laid down in the book, admeasured to the twentieth part of a scruple. Confident in their theoretical acquisitions, they could not comprehend the indispensable necessity of a large experience in actual cases of mental malady. And for the want of such experience, it was absolutely impossible that they should be *en rapport* with the souls they honestly desired to benefit. Can you heal a heart-ache with a syllogism? There is no dispensing with the precept and prescription, "Weep with those that weep!" "Be of the same mind one toward another!"

Theories of doctrine and of practice are not without their value; but the minister who is merely or chiefly a theorist, whether in doctrine or in measures, is an adventurer; and the chances against him are as many as the chances against the precise similarity of any two cases presented to his attention, — as many as the chances against the education of any two men of fifty years being precisely alike, in every particular and in all their results. The soul's prob-

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lems are not to be solved by theories. Such was not the practice of the Great Physician; "*Surely, He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.*" Theories shirk that. "*In all their affliction, He was afflicted; in His love and in His pity, He redeemed them.*" And precisely in this way his ministers are now to follow up his practice. Our age is growing less and less tolerant of formality, — less and less willing to accept metaphysical disquisition in place of a warm-hearted, loving, fervent expansion of the Word of God, recommended to the understanding and to the sensibility by lively illustrations of spiritual truth, derived from all the experience of life, from all observation, from all analogies in the natural world, — in short, from every manner of illumination, from the heavens above, from the earth beneath, and from the waters which are under the earth. God is surely everywhere, and hath made all things, and all to testify of Him; and the innumerable voices all agree together.

And when this is both understood and felt, what rules shall be given to guide and control the construction and the delivery of discourses? Shall we say, The people must be brought back to the old-time endurance, — ay, *endurance*, that is the word, — of long-drawn, laborious ratiocinations, wherein the truth is diligently pursued for its own sake, with an ultimate reference, indeed, to the needs and uses of the hearer, but so remote as rarely to be noticed, except by that very small fraction of any customary

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congregation who may chance to have an interest in such doings, — some of whom watch the clergyman as they would the entomologist, running down a truth that he may empale it, and add one more specimen to his well-ordered collection of common and uncommon bugs? Our neighbors fn the South do better than this; for they hunt with the lasso, and never throw the noose except to capture something which can be harnessed to the wheels of common life.

No, the people are not going back to the endurance of any such misery. They have found out that still-born rhetoric is by no means the one thing needful, and care far less for the *art* of speech than for the *nature* of a holy heart. They want a man to speak less of what he believes and more of what he feels. The expectation of bringing the people again to endure prolonged metaphysical discriminations, spun out of commonplace minds, cobwebs to cloak their own nakedness and universal inaptitude, if indulged, is absurdly indulged. The whole Church is sick of such trifling. She knows well that it has made her most unsavory to those who might have found their way into the temples of God, or kept their places there, but for the memory of an immense amount of wearisome readings from the pulpit, — too often a vocabulary of words seldom or ever found out of sermons, — a manner of speech which, when tried by the sure test of natural, animated conversation, must be pronounced absurd and abominable. It is a wonder of wonders, that, in spite of such

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drawbacks, an individual here and there has been reclaimed from worldliness to the love and service of God.

The student-habits of the clergy most naturally lead them to prefer the formal statement, the studied elaboration of ideas, which their own training cannot but render facile and dear to them. And there is here and there a man who, in virtue of extraordinary genius, can infuse new life into worn-out phrases, — a man or two who can for a moment or for an hour, by the very weight and excellence of their thoughts, and because they truly and deeply feel them, arrest the age, and challenge and secure attention, in spite of all the infelicities of an antiquated style and an unearthly delivery. But in this age, more than ever before, we are summoned to surrender our scholastic preferences and esoteric honors to the exigencies of the million. And the men of this generation have, without much conference, come with great unanimity to the determination that they will not long endure, either in or out of the pulpit, speakers who are dull and unaffecting, whether from want of words, ideas, or method and wisdom in the arrangement of them, or lack of sympathy, — and especially that they will not endure dull declamation from the pulpit.

If any man really wish to know how he is preaching, let him imagine himself conversing earnestly with an intelligent and highly gifted, but uneducated man or woman, in his own parlor, or with his

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younger children. Would any but an idiot keep on talking, when, with half an eye, he might discern TEDIOUS, wrought by himself, upon the uncalloused sensibilities of his hearers?

How long ought a sermon to be? As long as you can read in the eyes of seven-eighths of your audience, *Pray, go on.* If you cannot read that, you have mistaken your vocation; you were never called to the ministry, The secret of the persuasive power of our favorite orators is in their constant recognition of the ebb and flow of the sensibilities they are acting upon. Their speech is, in effect, an actual conversation, in which they are speaking for as well as to the audience; and the interlocutors are made almost as palpably such as at the "Breakfast Table" of our dramatic "Autocrat." In contrast with this the dull preacher, falling below the dignity and the privilege of his office, addresses himself, not to living men, but to an imaginary sensibility to abstract truth. The effect of this is obvious and inevitable; it converts hearers into doubters as to whether in fact there be any such thing as a religion worth recommending or possessing, and preachers into complainers of the people as indifferent and insensible to the truth, — a libel which ought to render them liable to fine and punishment. God's truth, *fairly presented*, is never a matter of indifference or of insensibility to an intelligent, nor even to an unintelligent audience. However an individual here and there may contrive to withdraw himself from

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the sphere of its influence, truth can no more lose her power than the sun can lose his heat.

The people, under the quickening influences characteristic of our age, are awaking to the consciousness, that on the day which should be the best of all the week, they have been defrauded of their right, in having solemn dulness palmed upon them, in place of living, earnest, animated truth. Let not ministers, unwisely overlooking this undeniable fact, defame the people, by alleging a growing facility in dissolving the pastoral relation, — a disregard of solemn contracts, — a willingness to dismiss excellent, godly, and devoted men, without other reason than the indisposition to retain them. Be it known to all such, that capable men in every department of life were never in such request as at this very hour; and never since the world began, was there an audience so large and so attentive to truth, well wrought and fitted to its purpose, as now.

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III.

WHY PREACHING FAILS.

EVERY now and then somebody gives us the church-going statistics, from which it appears that the people do not go universally, nor even extensively. Indeed, it is not unfrequently remarked: "People do not go to church as much as they used to."

"How do you account for it?" we asked of a friend who made this remark, not many days ago.

"Oh, they are carried elsewhere by the isms of the day, — Adventism, Mormonism, Spiritualism, and every other new thing."

But delusions are not peculiar to our day; they have always existed in every age. Do you mean to pronounce the people more foolish now than they have been in any former age?

"Well, no, probably not. I rather think there was more talent in the pulpit, in former days, than there is now."

If by talent you mean learning, and skill to use it, in accordance with the canons of logic and rhetoric

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taught in our schools of learning, we can't agree with you. The evidence all points the other way. Our schools, colleges, and seminaries have unquestionably made long strides in advance of the attainments of former days. The scholarship of the men of mark was on the whole never so comprehensive, nor so accurate as now. So far, then, as scholarship has to do with filling our churches, the argument is in favor of our cotemporaries. And yet the fact is hardly to be questioned, — the people take less interest in church-going than formerly. Can there be any doubt that church services are a boon to man? or that they stand closely related to his best intellectual, moral, and spiritual condition? Surely not. Is the tendency of the age downward? We think not. Certainly the history of the past fifty years is a history of unparalleled progress. And no doubt the church attendance is numerically greater now than at any former time; and yet, it may be true, and probably is true, that the interest in preaching is not commensurate with the increase of interest in other departments of thought and instruction. Here is surely an evil, and

> "For every evil under the sun,
> There is a cure, or there is none;
> If there be one, find it;
> If there be none, don't mind it."

If absence from church, or infrequent and uninterested attendance on church, be an evil, there is a remedy, and it is worth while to find it. If it be

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true, as is very often affirmed, that the loss of reverence is so general with us as to have become a national characteristic; that reverence for office, for wisdom, for years, for man, and even for God, has sadly decreased among us, then it is plain that every philanthropist should, to the utmost of his ability, encourage the public reverence and worship of God; the obligation is recognized in churches of every name. Moreover, if the instruction given in our churches is fitted to the current necessities of our day, then most certainly it is an evil, and a great evil, that, on any pretext, the people fail to receive it. But, it is said, by both clergy and laity, less deference is given to the instructions of the pulpit than formerly. What then? Are the clergy prepared to abandon the ground? Has a decree of destiny gone forth against them?

"No, but the people have lost their interest in religious truth. They are less patient of any demands upon their close attention and serious thought than formerly."

It is true that the people are less tolerant of indirection than formerly. Their necessities have constrained them so to be. But it may well be doubted if the best books ever had more readers, the best teachers in every department of science ever had more attentive listeners, than now. If, then, the pulpit has less power to affect the public than formerly, it seems inevitable to conclude that somewhere there is a fault, or an oversight, that should

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be discovered and remedied. It is surely derogatory to no man, to no class of men, to inquire after errors. "Who can understand his errors?" is a very ancient exclamation; and as timely to-day as when first uttered. It wells up like a natural spring out of the depths of conscious imperfection: out of the consciousness of the man who is supremely solicitous to be a perfect man. It owns that the best intentioned man may be misled; that he may be warped by unnoticed influences, by agencies which he sees no reason to distrust, which have the almost inviolable sanction of long usage and of tradition from some of the best of men. Such tradition and usage have sometimes made it heresy even to glance at elements of influence freely placed at our disposal.

Fully recognizing that our religious teachers, as a body, are right-minded, intelligent, conscientious, and intent on benefiting their fellow-men, we propose to show that the ordinary hindrances to the accomplishment of their desire are much increased by the network of circumstances in which they are successively enclosed.

One of their most serious impediments to the largest influence arises from an exaggerated estimate of the worth of unusual knowledge. How far will a bright boy get on in the Latin grammar, think you, before he will begin to thank God that he is not as other boys, or even as these high-school boys, at the other end of the building? Thenceforth, the summit

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of human greatness, and of human excellence, in his view, is eminence in some department of science which will distinguish and separate him from — not unite him to — his fellow-men. And yet, Latin grammar, thoroughly studied, offers a preparation for usefulness in any department of life, the worth of which it would hardly be possible to exaggerate. If the boy is made to understand that the exact analysis of a dead language is of great value in giving him the most perfect freedom and mastery of his own living language, and that the command of this latter is the condition of deepest sympathy and largest influence with his fellow-men, and especially of the largest ability to do them good, then will he have an antidote to that poison of vanity and pedantry which is so often imbibed in the very milk of a liberal education.

There are evils incident to every profession in life, and one of the evils incident to that of the professional educator is, that eminent excellence in his own particular science is for him the *ultima ratio*. He cannot well view it as a means to an end, — not if he loves it, as it is presumed he does. He has little or no time allowed him to show his pupils the worth of what they are upon, as it stands related to the demands of future life. There is a certain mechanical exactitude of recitations which can be seen, and heard, and handled, up to which, with or without ponies, a respectable fraction of each class can be urged, and a proper concern for his own reputa-

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tion compels each teacher to see to it, that he delivers his class, in due time, to the teacher who is to follow him, in condition to meet the requirements of this acknowledged standard. And so our young men go through our schools of learning, and emerge into the real world, as any aspiring collegian will tell you, with an awkward sense of having somehow lost their identity, and all its fancied consequence. Then commences the struggle to mate the life that was with the life that is; to disabuse the mind of mistaken estimates, of exaggerated estimates of the student world, and of derogatory estimates of the real world. Then it is discovered that the greatest possible acquisitions in some one science, and that, an unusual science — unusual, in that it is removed from the experience of the million — is peculiarly suited to separate the teacher and his pupil from their kind. Dominie Sampson is discovered to be a representative man; and happy for young Harry Bertram if he escapes growing into the image and likeness of his master, and so becoming unfit for companionship with the world he is to live in.

The necessity of thorough mental training is not to be questioned. The adaptation of Latin, Greek, and Mathematics, to develop some of the finest powers of man, will never be doubted by those who have wisely used their proffered aid. But the youth who is fed on this diet from ten to twenty-three, his appetite stimulated by all the condiments known to the schools, will be in danger of graduating with no

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stomach for common food, and with little relish for the society, on equal terms, of the human brotherhood to which he is predestined. Our educated men, as they are commonly termed, ought to be the men of the age. The men of the age are the men of most worth to the age they live in. To be this, they must be heartily in and of their age; must thoroughly know and deeply sympathize with it. Each age has its own characteristics. Former ages have been characterized by a reverence for individual minds, of which, in our age, we can find no illustration. The age of hero-worship has perhaps gone by. Will any man venture to assert that the change is altogether and only for the worse? The age of reverence is also an age of superstition, and of vassalage to the few superior minds. Our age is an age of fraternity, of sympathy, and of co-operative energy in every good work. Meanwhile our educational system, in no inconsiderable degree, is the system of an obsolete age; not wholly unaffected by the spirit of our age, in that it has caught the idea of progress, but not harmonizing with it, in its application of the idea; for its voice is, give us more Latin, more Greek; raise the standard of scholarship, and —— what? Commend the sphere of scholarship so as to ensure the sympathy of all? Nay, but rather widen the breach between the learned and the unlearned, and maintain the high prerogatives of the men of letters. Such is its interpretation of the exigencies of the present age. It is an error in any

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age, and in any land, and most emphatically an error in this land, in which the brotherhood of love and good will is universally proclaimed; in which no amount of exact science will bring worthy fame to the man who does not love and mingle with his fellow-men as fellow-men. Our educational system has blinded the eyes of not a few of our preachers to this truth. And many of them are finding their labors increasingly unsatisfactory, just because of their failure to apprehend it.

We shall indulge in no supposititious statements in support of this assertion; but confine ourselves to the confirmatory statements of living witnesses. In a body of clergymen recently convened in this commonwealth, the following question was discussed: —

"May improvements be made in the prevalent method of sermonizing, so as better to meet the present religious wants of the community?" "The Rev. N. G., D.D., found preaching to be a more difficult task every succeeding year. It was a grave, practical question, whether sound Christian doctrine could be so preached as to edify, to meet the modes of thought at the present day. There was talent enough, thought enough, but lack of adaptation; the pulpit and the pews moved in different planes of thought." "The Rev. Mr. C. inquired whether it could be said of ministers now, as of those of olden time, that the people heard them gladly? More sympathy is needed between pastors and people; a greater development of our humanity." "Dr. V.

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thought there was a great lack of doctrinal preaching." "Rev. Mr. P. deprecated the monotony so prevalent, the monotonous tones of the uncultivated, and no less the Boston style of refined intonations." "Rev. Mr. B. said that the ministers who succeeded at the West, were those who entered heartily into the feelings and lives of the people, their joys, trials, and difficulties." "Rev. Mr. A. said he had been taught to sermonize, and not to preach." "Dr. G. thought the war offered great opportunity for overthrowing the 'rosewater' and 'watergruel' style of preaching." "Dr. B. thought a clear biblical conception of the end of preaching essential, the conversion and sanctification of men, and that that end could never be reached without the aid of the Holy Spirit." "Rev. Mr. Q. considered a deep personal experience on the part of the preacher vitally necessary, in order to reach the hearts of the people; the path cannot be pointed out unless we ourselves have travelled it."

From this debate it appears that the current preaching is increasingly difficult and unsatisfactory to the clergy; that they doubt if the people hear them gladly; that they discover a want of sympathy between pastors and people; that the end of preaching is not clearly discerned, or earnestly taught, in all cases; and finally that there is a want of deep personal experience, and of conscious dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

These avowals are frank and wholesome. They

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are the confessions of men who earnestly desire to do better; to discover, if possible, and to remove the impediments to the largest usefulness under which they find themselves laboring. These experiences are by no means peculiar to this commonwealth, or to this continent. A recent writer in the *London Record* expresses his belief that "the large majority of sermon-hearers are bored, rather than interested, by the discourses they hear."

We maintain that this melancholy result is in no inconsiderable degree to be referred to a vicious educational system; a system which constantly tempts its pupils to make scholarship, and not the redemption and amelioration of the race, the chief end of life. It is the vice of selfishness; a subtle form of that very self-seeking and self-aggrandizement which has stained our whole nation; which even more than the southern monster evil, slavery, has drawn down the displeasure of heaven upon this hitherto happy and prospered land. The direct object of the most thorough education is not to bring honor to the student, to his professor, or to his Alma Mater; but to produce a man qualified and disposed to be, in the highest possible degree, useful to his fellow-men; a man thoroughly furnished unto all good works, and full of the heart to use his furniture, to the utmost, in such works. It is absurd for any man to think of preaching the gospel of Christ who has not pledged himself to God and his own soul, to exterminate every root of selfishness

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from his own heart. We want a stalwart ministry, able to rend the shackles of the schools, and prompt to use that method of discourse which will accomplish the work of the ministry and persuade men. How a great nation of the old world can endure the control of a sovereign whose only title is succession, has always seemed strange and inexplicable. But while thus intolerant of a civil despotism without merit, we have bowed our necks in unreasoning submission to the merciless yoke of an educational system which exists only by our permission, and which it is in our power to rend any day.

The pulpit cannot lose what it does not possess, and the ministry will never be trampled on for addressing themselves to that which they are best able to do well. Unquestionably, there is a limited number of men who were designed by God to write able and persuasive essays and disquisitions; compositions, whose design is, in a scholarly way, to prove or illustrate some Bible truth, in accordance with the sermons of the masters in logic and rhetoric. Their triumphant success vindicates their use of this method; they attract large congregations; they hold every eye and ear in charmed attention; their words sink down into the soul; their lessons are never forgotten. There are not enough of these men to supply all the pulpits in the land, even were all the congregations able to profit by such a ministry. But there are congregations enough to take many aspirants for this eminence, who never attain it; congre-

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gations who mistake the aspiration for the attainment; and who are ever offering a bounty to young ministers to persevere on the wrong track. There are men, well fitted to be very useful men, who were never designed to affect others by written discourse; there is not heat enough in their souls to animate abstract ideas; a sheet of paper may kindle pine wood, but it will not ignite anthracite. Even John Foster, that giant in laborious writing, declares that "the successes of intellectual effort are never so great as when aided by the affections that animate social converse." The men of whom we speak cannot dispense with the animating influence of the attentive eye and ear, demanding the sentiments which only that visible demand will call into being.

Whether for better or for worse, we see not how it can be denied that the peculiar power the pulpit once possessed is much abated. This is, in fact, the not unfrequent complaint of the clergy. It is wise to inquire for the reason. It may prove not to be an occasion of unqualified regret. It may turn to the advantage of both preacher and people, that we have come to distinguish between the office and the man; between the pulpit and what is said from it. It may necessitate the discovery and use of each man's own gift. And how many men in a hundred, think you, will discover the gift to write and to read for an secure the attention and profit of the major- Christ who gregations? own soul, to ere are difficulties to be overcome

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in attaining ability in extemporaneous and in expository discourse. We have not been unwarned of the danger of sinking into mere commonplace. But to make the argument convincing, it must be shown that those who cannot be enkindled to the most useful, intellectual, and emotional life, when in the focus of some hundreds of intelligent eyes and ardent hearts, can more surely acquire this fervor in the isolation of the study. But were the argument in favor of extemporaneous discourse, derived from the necessities of adults, insufficient, the almost total failure of written discourses to secure the interest of the young, appears to us to be unanswerable. A wise mother in Israel, across the water, has written "An Appeal to the Ministers of Christ in behalf of the Little Ones." She will be heard in time; not yet, perhaps; for the majority will say, "We can't extemporize; we cannot do ourselves, or our subjects, justice in extemporaneous discourse." And many will own that "they cannot talk to children." Then you cannot talk to the majority of your congregations, and we much fear that you have mistaken your vocation. But the truth of the matter is, if you were in your proper vocation, you could and would talk to children, and that successfully, had you not been in some way persuaded of the paramount importance of excelling in a kind of preaching which you find incompatible with this. Highly intellectual and scholarly discourse doubtless has its proper sphere, but we don't want Blair or Butler to edify our chil-

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dren. "The little ones," whether in years or in development, were made to be reached through the heart, heart throbbing against heart, glimmering in the eyes, trembling on the tongue, soliciting and winning an immediate assent, and enlisting the enkindled affections for God and holiness. Hear that mother: "Are the discourses delivered from our pulpits fitted to be a help in training young hearts to love the Sabbath? The whispered question, 'When will it be done?' and the look of relief when it is done, awaken anxious thoughts in a mother's heart; and while she leads them homeward, painful questions stir within her as to the practical effect of their regular attendance at church. Is it not really teaching them to call the Sabbath a weariness, to sit before the Lord as his people sit, while the ever busy mind is far away, seeking relief from its own bright imaginings?"

But hear this witness further: "The loud tone of declamation conveys to a young child the idea of anger; and the image of an angry minister becomes associated with that of an angry God. This is one reason why the religion of children is often one of fear; hence often arise those vague and terrifying thoughts which darken their bright and confiding spirits, and scare them from the tender arms of the good shepherd. What a blessing it would be to mothers and children (ay, to all the congregation), if ministers would take with them from their firesides to the pulpit the simple, friendly tone of conversa-

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tion on spiritual things." A blessing indeed! but alas, both the pulpit and the pew, acting and reacting upon each other, have come to an agreement that the dignity of the minister, and not the less the dignity of the congregation, demands an intellectual, scholastic, and eloquent presentation, such as shall authorize the people to glory in their minister. Because of this bad ambition, some of our churches are weak and sickly, and some sleep.

"We have been told," says that mother, "by an aged minister, that he had taken great pains to ascertain what kind of preaching was most used of God in converting and edifying men; and the inquiries of a long life, among Christians of different denominations, had brought him to this conclusion, namely, that most good is done by conversational preaching." Of course it would be so. And this kind of preaching has the sanction of our Lord's example; and yet, such is the power of traditional persuasion, such the self-perpetuating influence of the scholastic usage, and of *esprit du corps*, that the great majority of preachers will go through life reiterating their melancholy confessions of dissatisfaction with their ministry, sacrificing both good sense and usefulness, rather than break away from the established order of reading the old to sleep and the young into hatred of the day and house of God.

Now there are not a few ministers, good men and true, who seem to have no suspicion that this is not an inevitable and unchangeable order of things.

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They will tell you, and tell you truly, that they cannot preach to children, and there they rest — nay, there 's little rest in it — but there they stick fast. "It would almost seem," says the mother I have quoted, "that the King's ambassadors are acting in the belief that his rule has been reversed; that it has now become God's method to reveal these things to the wise and prudent, and to hide them from the babes." Our age is often characterized as an intelligent age; it would, perhaps, be more just to speak of it as an age of remarkable mental activity; but in all that pertains to religious instruction, the common, not to say constant mistake, is to assume a correctness of apprehension that does not exist. We are not sufficiently mindful that as the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, so every degenerate man is slow of heart, both to understand and to believe all the prophets, apostles, and our Lord himself have spoken; and the large majority of all our congregations require, not necessarily monosyllables, but truth in that form, easy of apprehension, which animated conversation offers. "In former days," says the writer quoted, "nothing was brought down to the capacity of childhood; the week-day task and the Sabbath sermon were alike unintelligible. But now the sermon stands in contrast with all the other means of instruction provided." Lessons in everything but in religion are enforced by every aid animated conversation can supply. Looks, tones, gestures, figures, illustrations,

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all spring into life spontaneously, offering the utmost power of persuasion, when an earnest man converses with those whom he desires to influence. The consciousness of getting hold of them unlocks his own fountains of feeling, and asks, and receives a corresponding outgoing of sympathy from them. Such were Christ's conversation sermons; and they are our model. And why should any of our preachers hesitate to accept them as such? Because it is not the fashion of our day. Because hardly a man, in or out of the pulpit, is able to believe that the ministry could sustain itself, if divested of the flowing robes and embroidered garments of scholastic rhetoric. Because men are afraid to risk a style of sermonizing that has nothing to recommend it but its fitness to convince, convert, and persuade to holy living. We can put our finger at this moment upon a prominent church, past the incipient stage of dissolution, mortally stricken with this disease; they can't find a minister with a competent wardrobe. The great shepherd could send them one clothed in the beauty of holiness, and apt to teach; but they must have a change of raiment; not silk and muslin — they reject *that*, but are not less tenacious of what better deserves to be rejected as "millinery." They cannot venture their interests in the hands of one who is simply "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." They are slow to believe that a shepherd's sling and smooth stones out of the brook could be any match for the ponderous armor of the

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Philistine. Only those who, in their love and deference for our Lord's teaching, have become as little children, are willing to throw themselves upon the simplest forms of speech as best adapted to convey the weightiest lessons in religious truth; only those who have forgotten themselves in their tender concern for "the little ones," and who are content to be esteemed fools for their sake and for Christ's sake; only these can believe that the Holy Ghost, the indwelling Comforter, can and will teach those who rely on him, how to converse with man about the things of God. Practically, many a preacher, many a church, too, are in the condition of those Ephesians who had not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

No one will deny the superiority of written discourse in those characteristics which commend such discourse to the admiration of the critical hearer; for example, in breadth of view; in the comprehension of many particulars; in scholastic method, in careful elaboration, in completeness, in finish, and polish. But to meet the wishes of such hearers is very far from being the first duty, or the legitimate province of the preacher. When John sent two of his disciples to learn if Jesus were the Christ, one of the vouchers adduced was this: "To the poor the gospel is preached." The poor are unlearned and uncritical. In that sense they constitute the majority of our congregations to-day. Christ's method was singular in that it was not scholastic. The majority

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of preachers, keeping near to Christ, would be singular to-day, and for the same reason; the supreme concern to persuade men to be reconciled to God, would put them upon that use of language which would get the ear and understanding of the multitude. And though a man here and there may be so endowed of God that his natural and proper line of things is to affect men most powerfully and usefully by elaborate written discourse, the men who can do this are exceptions to the general rule. Where one is capable of doing this, and of so doing it as to rise superior to the natural inaptitude of most men to be swayed by such discourse, there are hundreds who can do nothing of the kind; and whose attempts to do it can result in nothing but loss and detriment to their hearers, and disappointment and discouragement to themselves. The attainment of a decent mediocrity in this direction will be secured only by the sacrifice of nearly all the elements of power which belong to free discourse when prompted and animated by a living sympathy with those who are addressed. Do we not all know that there are many men who converse well, who are very acceptable speakers in off-hand discourse, who can contribute their full quota to the interest of any informal gathering, for almost any purpose, who no sooner enter the pulpit than the breath of common life forsakes them? they have got above fruits and flowers, above animal life, away up in the region of dwarf shrubs and stunted pines, and near to perpetual frost. It is

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a transition from the walking-dress of prompt, animated, agreeable conversation, in which the speaker was entirely at home, and able to meet any demand made upon him, to the heavy armor of formal prelections, and the supposed necessity of marshalling platoons of unaccustomed polysyllables into active service, under a weight of dignity much more in accordance with a dress parade than with real work to be done.

Immediate favor for the views now urged we do not expect; and that for several reasons. The work of education is mostly in the hands of those long wedded to a different course. Teachers and preachers from time immemorial have accepted as the highest and almost only models, intellectual labors designed to win applause for their originality, imagination, logic, rhetoric, or learning. They are unable to believe that a departure from these models can be anything but a grievous loss to both speaker and hearer. It is in this view of the case that we find some of them protesting that "the modes of thought and feeling in the pews ought to be raised to those of the pulpit, rather than the reverse." They cannot think it right to yield to the growing demand for a less dignified and less scholastic presentation of truth; they cannot pander — so they esteem it — to a depraved appetite for something stimulating. They feel sure that in so doing they should lower the standard and lessen the influence of preaching. Now all such objections have a foundation, in part, in

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truth. There are undoubtedly men in every congregation, more or fewer, who would be best pleased to be entertained with novelties; who do not go to church for religious instruction and improvement. But these objections are in part without foundation, because of assuming that the demand for a more animating style of preaching than sufficed our forefathers, necessarily involves the sacrifice of dignity, sound wisdom, and deep piety, and that this demand comes only from those who have itching ears. They have never witnessed, say the objectors, an instance of marked success in the conversational line; they doubt if such a thing could be; the nearest approaches to it they have ever seen were accompanied by such infelicities as made them cling to the old method with more tenacity than ever.* They find no warrant in any conscious ability to accomplish much by pulpit conversation, to infer that the rising generation are likely to effect more. Why not be content with the old method which is safe, rather than attempt new ways, which are uncertain, and known to be attended with some risk? Every department of life is filled with illustrations of a like unwillingness to listen to demands for changes from accustomed ways. We have not forgotten the resistance steamboats and locomotives encountered, when it was proposed to substitute these for stage coaches and sailing vessels. We are all creatures of habit, and most unwilling to surrender the vantage ground and

* Get and study Rev. Richard Newton's "Sermons for Children."

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confidence which habit and use supply. There is a weighty reason for not being content with the old method of preaching; it does not accomplish the work; it does not persuade men. The preachers themselves being witnesses, our congregations are falling off. There is reason to believe that the fault is with the pastors and churches; we have no right to be content with the indifference to religious instruction which prevails. We all know that intelligent, animated conversation, on any topic, easily secures the attention of all within hearing, who are able to comprehend the matter of it; while preaching is almost a synonym for something which, though respectable for its origin and ostensible purpose, is hard to be endured, and, when possible, is to be assiduously avoided. The majority of hearers have so long accustomed themselves to endure sermons with martyr resignation, as an inevitable evil, that religious teachings to be eagerly anticipated and lovingly desired, are something seldom or never realized, and often regarded as without the pale of probability. Consider C. S. Spurgeon.

There is no obligation to be longer resigned to this state of things. On the part of the people it would be an unworthy and censurable resignation, as implying an indifference to religious truth, whether it were made interesting and available or not; making church-going significant of superstition, formalism, or hypocrisy. On the part of the preacher it would be the extreme of cowardice and inhumanity; of supine-

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ness and of disloyalty to God. Such was not the resignation of the Apostle Paul, who says, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." We do not mean, for an instant, to deny that existing methods have done much for the limited number who have come under their best influences; but we do mean to assert, what is patent to all, that they fail of arresting the attention, and of engaging the interest of the very large majority of men, women, and children. They are not won by them, and never will be won by them, to the knowledge and love of God. To indulge a vague belief that God will some day miraculously interpose to impart an irresistible efficacy to a kind of preaching which is at present so nearly powerless, is not the part of faith, but rather of presumption and of indolence; it is to take a sleeping potion in place of shaking off dull sloth and girding on the whole armor of God. Resignation to an indifferent and apathetic audience, Christ and eternal life being the theme, when it rests with the preacher to rouse them to the highest condition of animated life, is worse than Oriental fatalism. It is being resigned to have God's work suffer in our hands; resigned to the dishonor of God's drafts on us for treasures placed in our hands for their use. But, you are perhaps saying, "I am not sensible that it does rest with me thus to rouse men to a sense of the worth of eternal things." No, nor will you be likely to become so, so long as you hang back and stand behind your written discourse, and

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fear to trust to the inspiration of the Spirit, even when you have done your utmost to penetrate and to be penetrated by truth. You pray, "Lord, increase my faith," but refuse to venture in the strength of all his promises, to give the message entrusted to you its best chance to be heard and to win its way to the heart.

It is a hopeful indication that some of our preachers are becoming alive to this; that they are beginning to recognize the necessity of a change; to realize the absurdity of entering the arena of strife for the souls of men, with a manuscript sermon, to *read* men out of confirmed habits of disobedience to God, and of neglect of their own souls, by a logical disquisition on the disadvantages of such habits, delivered in that reading tone which no reader wholly escapes, and which very few, with all the wear and tear of unnatural earnestness, can free from an irresistible soporific influence. God's truth deserves to have every advantage of a *living* advocacy. God's demand upon man is for his heart; and whoever heard of winning love by reading! Just conceive of human intercourse with all its thousand persuasive and winning ways of looks, tones, gestures, illustrations, and arguments, supplied by the spontaneity of exuberant life, put into the strait-jacket of formal reading! Men are called in the Scriptures "the children of the Most High;" and God speaks of himself as a most tenderly affectionate Father. His messengers are sent

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to his obedient and also to his disobedient children; with instructions to commend and encourage the one, and to reprove and reclaim the other. No instructions are given to read them disquisitional essays, but they are commanded to warn, and entreat, and instruct in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. They were of course to read for their own profit and to store their minds and hearts, too, with matter for exhortation and for doctrine; but being thus thoroughly furnished to every good work, they were to give the truth in such manner and form as would ensure its doing its errand. Every friend of virtue knows the power of lively, animated conversation, in the hands of wicked men, to corrupt our youth; but it is hard to convince those who have not made full proof of conversation for good purposes, how great a power is lying unused in their hands. We often hear it stated that preaching is God's appointed method of saving the world; and the passage is quoted, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe;" but no evidence has been adduced to vindicate the assumption that the reading of written sermons is the preaching here intended. The reasonable presumption is that written sermons were wholly unknown when the Apostle recorded that fact. His charge to Timothy to "preach the word, instant in season, out of season," harmonizes well with the supposition that he talked, talked earnestly, and as the Spirit gave him utterance. When

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Christ commanded his disciples, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," had he any intention that a line or two from that gospel should suffice as a mere motto to some long disquisition on the nature of true virtue, interspersed with hints of Christ and his salvation as remote from the apprehension of the common hearer as the fixed stars? We have, it is true, a great many discourses that are not so bad as this; but we have a great many that fail of establishing an inevitable conviction, *this is the very word of God.* We have many a prayer after a sermon, that God would bless his truth now presented, which starts the question, Has his truth been presented? We had a good text; but the long discourse failed of establishing any close and living relation to that text; and taking matter and manner into the account, we cannot resist the conviction that the Lord is of our mind, in demurring to recognize what has now been spoken, as his message to that congregation. We came to the house of prayer hoping to meet a messenger from God, speaking the truth in love; not love in a figure, or on stilts; not love "in linked sweetness long drawn out;" or in well rounded periods, in the full costume of pulpit rhetoric and logic; but love unrestrained and overflowing from an inexhaustible fountain of divine and human tenderness, from the very life of God in the soul of man. In place of that we get an essay, a disquisition, a homily. We asked for bread, and received a stone.

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Take the ministerial account of existing failures; here it is: "There is talent enough, thought enough, but lack of adaptation." Could there be a greater lack than this? Why a stone has weight, and form, and color, in perfection; but it lacks adaptation; it won't nourish. The preaching which so extensively prevails may have a form of sacred words, but what if it fails to get the ear and the interest of the majority of the congregation? Is it successful preaching?

"Ah," it is said, "preaching is different from anything else; it has the peculiar disadvantage of offering an unwelcome theme; for the majority of the people, like Gallio, care for none of these things."

It is not to be denied that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God;" but the attempt to derive from this a full account of the want of interest in our Sabbath services, comes of an unwillingness to convict ourselves of failure in duty. The assertion, "These are spiritual truths, which only the spiritual man can discern," is hastily and most unwarrantably assumed to be equivalent to the declaration that faithful preaching must necessarily be uninteresting to the majority of any congregation. This assumption, if allowed, would certainly offer a convenient screen, for those who desire one, to protect uninteresting and unproductive discourses from rebuke and censure; but it cannot be allowed, for it is utterly untrue. The real account of the matter has been perhaps inadvertently, but truly given; the

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sermons which fail to get the ear and interest of our congregations. "fail through lack of adaptation."

"What!" it will perhaps be demanded, with flushed cheek and perturbed mind, "do you mean to assert that I do not preach that gospel which St. Paul declares to be 'the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth?'"

We assert nothing. We simply assent to what you have affirmed, as a truth confirmed by our own observation, that there is in most preaching a lack of adaptation. It is adapted to weary and to alienate, not to interest and to enlist in the service of Christ. It seems in your hands to lack the manliness and the heartiness of the Apostle whom you have quoted. The man who gloried in the cross of Christ, who cared naught for bonds and affliction, who declared, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Think you this man ever contented himself with reading his message to an uninterested congregation, consoling himself under his unproductive labor with the assertion that the gospel must needs be dull to the unspiritual? No, indeed! that did not the Apostle Paul. He had experience of congregations of all sorts; believing and unbelieving; decorous and riotous; assenting and dissenting; but uninterested! — never.

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"Well, what would you have? He that finds fault with our existing order of things is bound to point out the remedy. How shall we amend?"

We answer, get a deeper experience of the love of God in your own soul. Give yourself to Christ in a far more comprehensive consecration than you have ever yet attained to. Get such an experience of the indwelling Comforter that you shall dare to tell it, naturally, earnestly, with a single eye and heart to the weal of your hearer; in sublime indifference to all that the schools and the schoolmen have to say against untrammelled conversational preaching. You want nothing but a greatly increased knowledge, and fearless love of Christ, and of his love to man, to supply all your lack of adaptation. Get this and you will need no argument in favor of a natural and most effective manner of preaching. And do not fail to remember that you can have what you need for the asking; for your Heavenly Father is more willing to give his Spirit to them that ask him, than parents to give good gifts to their children.

[Since writing the above, Rev. Dr. Jessup, one of our missionaries at Beirut, Syria, writes to Rev. Dr Richard Newton, of Philadelphia: "You are aware that we already have five of your volumes of 'Children's Sermons' translated into Arabic. I feel sure that next to issuing the Arabic Bible, this is the best work our press has done. The Arabic-speaking portion of the world's population is 136,000,000." Dr. Jessup has begun translating Dr. Newton's four volumes of "The Life of Christ for the Young." Think of this, ye that crave our Lord's "Well done," and study Dr. Newton's sermons.]

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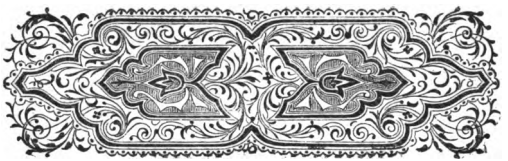

IV.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION.

JOHN the Baptist was declared by our Saviour to have no superior among them that are born of women. His greatness lay in his being the first to talk about Jesus; in his being specially commissioned to do this. Behold, he said, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. And he went on in a very simple way to speak of his superiority to himself, his previous existence, his baptism of the Holy Ghost; he was witness to this, and testified that Jesus is the Son of God.

John's disciples were very much interested in these simple statements, and they followed Jesus. After stopping with him that day, these two listeners to his words went in pursuit of others. Andrew found his own brother Simon, and told him that he had found the Messiah. Philip found Nathanael, and told him the same story. And so the story of Jesus was communicated from one to another. There were a great many listeners, it seemed, and interested listeners, too. There are a great many to-day.

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It is wonderful what a mystery wise men will make of the story of Jesus, and how to get a hearing for it.

"Very difficult! very difficult indeed," says one; "it 's easy to talk on any common subject, but very hard to talk about religion."

To be sure it is; religion, as you name it, is a system of philosophy in the hands of a monk or of an inquisitor-general; or a dry theology in the mouth of a metaphysician. By all means let us drop it, and talk of Christ, and what he can do, has done, and is willing now to do for a human soul. It is the easiest thing in the world for a simple, unpretending disciple of Christ to talk of his Master, and it is one of the most interesting things to hear him. Such a disciple's love is contagious. There is no mounting stilts or batteries; no pretentious language, no threatening of a war of words, to provoke opposition and retaliation.

"Ah!" I hear you say, "such statements are easily made, but you can't change the fact, that what you recommend is very, very difficult."

That is true, my friend, *I* can't change the fact that some disciples find it very difficult; nor can I overcome that difficulty; but our Lord has the power, and that power He will give to such as really desire it; and by such, I mean those who care enough for it to be willing to make any necessary exertion, and to endure any necessary sacrifice. It may prepare the way for doing and for suffering, if we point out

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the needs be for exertion, and the incidental exposure to suffering.

A man can make nothing of suitable conversation about Jesus, who is unwilling that his whole soul shall be roused to meet the demand put by the Holy Ghost into the mouth of Paul: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service; and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The man who is not disposed to find the will of God good, acceptable, and every way perfect; who cannot say, "I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart;" cannot make very much even of talk about Jesus. The first demand and indispensable necessity, too, is for self-sacrifice. Jesus must *reign* in a man's soul before he can know Him, and the man must know Him before he can talk about Him.

But to know Jesus a man must drink of his cup, and be baptized with His baptism. Jesus has promised to send the Holy Ghost to educate him, and his tuition includes the cup and the baptism. Every disciple has a suspicion — a glimmering, or it may be more — of this; and, alas! when the threatened cup comes to the lips, almost all of the disciples forsake him and fly.

"You can't believe this; you can't see it so?"

Perhaps I can assist you to see it. Listen to Jesus. "And He said unto them, go ye into all the world,

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and preach the Gospel to every creature." What do you say to this?

"Oh, if I were only a capable preacher, I should rejoice to do so."

But Christ was not speaking to capable preachers; quite otherwise. He was speaking to the rank and file of the Gospel army; and he bade them all go.

"But you surely do not mean to deny that our circumstances are very different from theirs; and that a competent preacher now needs a very different, and a much more elaborate, education?"

I don't mean to deny anything that is true. But as Jesus was not speaking to ordained and highly educated men, no more am I. I am but echoing His command, Go! go one, go all, and speak for and of your Master, go now. Deliver your message without elaboration, simply, earnestly, affectionately, as one filled with the love of the Master. Have you any doubt of willing and attentive ears? I don't believe you have. Why, then, do you not go and talk of Jesus to all within your reach?

"Oh, I have n't the gift. It 's a rare gift, and I never possessed it."

Did you ever acquire any language without grappling with the alphabet, monosyllables, dissyllables, and polysyllables? Have you ever strengthened any of your muscles by total disuse?

"Oh, but I have made some efforts in conversation; enough to satisfy me that that is not my line.

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My forte lies in the carefully prepared written production. It is a great matter — this matter of religion; a very serious matter indeed. I would not trust myself to give utterance to my sentiments in a crude and ill-digested form. If I am ever to do anything to save the souls of men, I must hold my mind free from exciting circumstances, and guard against those unexpected surprises to which all free speech, and particularly colloquial speech, is liable."

In short, you think it best to keep within your entrenchments, and fight from these. Rifled cannon of very long range are your favorite weapons, it would seem. And you will, I have no doubt, find your experience foreshadowed in that of our military men, who report that an immense number of such shots hit nothing but the earth. No, my dear friend, you deceive yourself, I care not what your gifts may or may not be; if you do not, and will not take the necessary pains to cultivate the precious power of conversation, you must be prepared some day to face the painful discovery that you buried at least one talent for which you must account to God, because you were either indolent or ashamed of Jesus. Be not deceived. Pretexts for avoiding this cross to self-love come to us in forms so plausible as to deceive the very elect. The devil arrays these excuses in garments of light; for he knows well the power of close, friendly, personal conversation, and fears it far more than he fears the influence of most sermons. A plea for Jesus, enforced by all the pathos of a warm-

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hearted love to God and man is something which he finds it very difficult to arrest; and he, therefore, does all in his power to multiply and to exaggerate hinderances to the performance of this duty. In every one of our congregations there may be found at all times persons who are willing, and even hoping, to be spoken with about Jesus; about His tender interest in their souls, His desire for their regeneration, and His willingness to take them into His service, and pay them glorious wages.

My friend, are you doing what you can? Do not say "I am not a clergyman; this is the peculiar province of a clergyman." If you are a disciple; if you have heard of Jesus and believed on Him, you have been adopted into his family. You have become His servant; you are made a minister; you are commissioned by our Lord himself to talk of Him. A disciple is a learner: and our Lord's school is the great original of the "mutual system;" as a learner you are required to be also a teacher; the unalterable condition and requirement of His school is, teach what you learn as fast as you learn it, and you shall be advanced daily and hourly.

Do not say, "I am a preacher, and the expectations of the people nowadays are such that it is impossible for me to find time for much conversation. The weekly discourses expected of me leave me no such time. I am always to be found in my study at proper hours, and those who desire conversation should come to me." There is not a question that

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you sincerely desire to convert and instruct your people; the simple question is, will preaching only do it? And as to their expectations from the pulpit, let them be taught that "one is your Master, even Christ;" and that all other expectations must be subordinated to the Master's; and his expectation is, that you will find the lost lambs and sheep, and bring them to Him. Serve a written notice, if you will, on all you find within the church walls. If they respond to the summons, so far so good; but are there not many in your parish of whom, if not sought elsewhere, you would be obliged to make return "not found." Do not allow yourself even to attempt to make out a valid excuse and exemption from this duty and privilege. Suppose you should succeed in persuading yourself and others that you have not the privilege of doing much, or anything at all, in the use of religious conversation; what will you have done? Nay, go farther, and suppose that you obtain exemption from the Lord; what then? Why, then you will have obtained permission to prefer your will to His; you will have received "your request, and leanness into your soul;" the best portion of your Lord's vineyard in your soul, the flower-garden of the heart, will be uncultivated; you will have no community of experience with our Lord in those yearnings of soul which are prompted by an intimate acquaintance with the interior life of his lambs and sheep; it will never be said of you, as it should be said of every faithful shepherd, "when he putteth forth his own sheep, he

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goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice."

The truth is, self-love entices the most of us to avoid faithful religious conversation. We would be on friendly terms with all; they may like us less if we venture on this. "What will they think of me!" we exclaim. No matter what they "think of me;" the question of real moment is, what will they think of Jesus? And the prayer of no less importance is, "Lord, strengthen me to speak for thee, and give me grace to speak wisely. Holy Ghost, dwelling in me, show me the things of Christ so that I may hold them up to this immortal soul."

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V.

SELF-POSSESSION.

"YES," said an aged minister of the gospel, "I have often been blamed that I did not, while preaching, look my people in the face; but I could not do it; with my nervous temperament it was a thing impossible; the attempt to do it would produce a flutter that quite disabled and unfitted me to go on with my sermon."

It certainly might be rash to affirm that every one thus destitute of self-possession has and can have no call to the Christian Ministry; but it may be both wise and kind to propose a thought or two for the consideration of every such candidate; to say to him, "Thou knowest, brother, that on this continent, more than upon any other, the circumstances of the people have combined to make them intolerant of indirection in any and every form. Preambles from presiding chairmen in public meetings are endured with irritation and impatience. So of circuitous approaches to the theme of any teacher, preacher, or lecturer; the countenance of many a listener says to

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him who has eyes to see, 'Tell us what you would be at! If you have a definite thing to say, say it. Please understand, that the old time submission to the cloth and bands has passed away. We make small account of your B.A.'s and your M.A.'s, and little of your Ph.D.'s. Have you anything from your own experience to recommend as being of vital importance?'"

"You think you have.

"Well, go on; we will judge of that; it's soon seen; we have a sure test, and easily applied; a living theme will speedily emancipate its advocate from all embarrassing self-consciousness."

If this is true in a general way, as it surely is, incomparably more true is it of him who has any proper sense of being "a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God." The true call of God so magnifies His Son, as to dwarf every person and thing that exalteth itself. He who is truly called of God, is so called out of himself as to leave full and exclusive possession of the temple to the Comforter, the Holy Ghost. He who has worthily received the Holy Ghost is conscious of it, knowing that he himself no longer lives, but Christ lives in him. Once aware of this, his delight is, that through him Christ will reveal Himself to men. This man knows himself empowered to speak for Jesus, and so empowered to say, "My message is not mine, but His that sent me." This consciousness casts out all fear of man. But some will say,

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this consciousness of the indwelling of the Comforter is not so common as you would make it appear. I have known many ministers in my time, and very seldom have I known one who could or would assure me that he had any such consciousness; indeed, the most of whom I have known have held it for certain that the claim to any such confidence was a bad sign, significant of self-righteousness, and, probably, of hypocrisy.

But, my dear friend, can you possibly agree with them in this? Are you really in doubt if there is any genuine communion and fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ? and that in face of our Lord's declaration, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you?" and in face of St. Paul's demand: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" If it be certain, as it surely is, that even private Christians may and ought to know themselves to be unquestionably the temples of the Holy Ghost, how much more certainly should every man who takes upon him the ministry of Christ, know that he is both called and commissioned of God to declare His Word. It may therefore most reasonably be questioned if any man is called of God to be His minister who cannot and who does not absolutely hide himself behind his Lord; who cannot therefore truly say, "It is not I that speak, but Christ in me; by whom I am crucified unto the world, and the world unto me."

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And what hinders that every minister of God should so speak to-day and every day? Nothing but the lack of thorough consecration. The fact speaks for itself; the man who truly and thoroughly consecrates himself to Christ, is necessarily and inevitably emancipated from himself in the very act. It is only a partial consecration that leaves a swarm of disenabling doubts behind. The man who fully receives the Holy Ghost as his Comforter and guide, must and will, and does in fact, cast himself on Him for constant support and guidance. Conscious of this fact, he is once and forever emancipated from the fear of man, and from dependence on his own resources. He is ever saying and feeling, "In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength;" He will never leave me nor forsake me." The God-appointed minister must and will have perfect self-possession; which is only saying, that having promptly and gratefully accepted, and diligently used what God has given, he is emancipated from all bondage, and can freely cast himself upon the present help of the Comforter to deliver his message from the Lord. The real secret of comparative lack of usefulness, is, that almost none of those who call themselves ministers of God look to, and depend upon, the Holy Ghost for guidance, and for inspiration. "Them that honor me, will I honor."

There is a self-possession infinitely removed from self-complacency, from all conceit, from thinking of one's self more highly than we ought to think, in

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short, from thinking of one's self at all. It comes of being filled with the Spirit, from the realized indwelling of the Comforter, from the consciousness of entirely honest relations to our beloved, honored Lord, from supreme and undivided concern in everything to please Him. There may be good logic, good rhetoric, large stores of knowledge in many fields, adapted in all simply natural ways to influence men; there may be fine imagination, affluence of imagery, pure taste, great felicity of illustration, aptitude and tact in the use of these precious possessions, and, withal, large experience in intercourse with very various persons, all stopping short, far short of the largest power to persuade and benefit men, because of failing to subordinate all these to the inspiration, guidance, and entire control of the indwelling Comforter. It is only the man who thus intelligently and decisively places himself and all he has, is, and can become, at the disposal of the Holy Ghost, who can have a well-grounded expectation of reaching what our Lord proposes to him, and the efficiency he desires to give him. That consummate felicity, I must believe, is inseparable from a certain poise of soul which may not improperly be characterized as the rest of faith. Have you not sometimes seen a beautiful and swift-winged bird assuming to poise himself upon a slender stalk of grain, buoyant, jubilant, and every whit alive? What holds him thus exalted, and fascinating the eye of the beholder? It is not the stalk of grain; it could not bear his

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weight; it is not the delicate and vigorous wings alone; it is the will of God, sweetly co-ordinating all laws within and without, that regulate and modify the buoyant and beautiful life. To the speaker thus poised upon the will of God, thus nourished by the heart of God, there is given a transcendent power to instruct and nourish those to whom he is divinely sent. Through this ministration of the Comforter there comes in the same instant a double benediction to the speaker thus emancipated from himself, and so enabled to become in very deed an ambassador for Christ; and to the hearer, in that he gets a like emancipation from man, and so hears not the ambassador but the Lord Himself. Speaking thus, the preacher is enabled to look into the eyes, and yet more, into the very heart of him to whom he is speaking.

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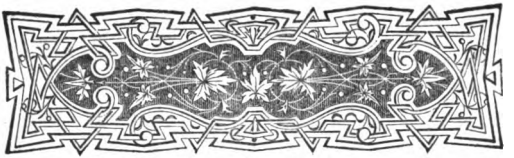

VI.

MINISTERIAL CULTURE.

THE address of Professor Phelps on Ministerial Culture is the mature thought of an unselfish seeker for truth, on the question of our time. It embodies the conclusions of one who has merited and has won the affectionate confidence and the high respect of all Christians. It, therefore, deserves very thoughtful and very prayerful consideration.

His opening statement is, "The ideal of a preacher which I have uniformly had in view, is that of a scholar, using his scholarship with the aim of an orator."

To this ideal I most respectfully object; not because it is wrong in itself; not that it may not be right, in the place it holds in the Professor's own intellectual and spiritual life. But that which is not wrong in itself, may be wrong in the position assigned to it. The ideal under consideration, is made the central object in a picture in which it should have its place among the accessories. Scholarship and

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oratory are permitted, first, to usurp the place of intense sympathy with God; and also, second, to occupy the place of intense humanity, the man yearning over men, with an irresistible solicitude to save and to elevate. Finally, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the source of all power in the preacher, is not even mentioned. That there is in his own apprehension, something amiss, either with his ideal, or with the position assigned to it, is apparent, for, "alongside of the conviction" that this ideal is the true one, "he finds another conviction, also deepening with years," namely, "that our Protestant denominations, are not, in all respects, using this theory of high culture in the ministry, in a Christian way. Somehow or other, it is not working altogether right in practice. A scholarly ministry, taken as a whole, we must confess, is working away from the unscholarly masses of the people." The confession might be enlarged, and be no less true; for the ministry is working away from many who can hardly be called "the unscholarly." No one, I am sure, can deprecate this result more sincerely, or more sorrowfully, than Professor Phelps. He says, "If I could be persuaded that the theory of ministerial culture which I have tried to represent to you, could result legitimately, in any such drifting asunder of the pulpit, and the lower orders of society, I would abandon the whole of it. I would drop it as I would a viper."

This I entirely believe. That Professor Phelps desires, before all other things, to honor God, in the

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conversion and highest spiritual improvement of men, does not admit of a doubt. On this very account, I am the more concerned to show that his ideal, carefully as he has endeavored to guard it, is not above the suspicion of procuring the very evil he deprecates.

I heartily concur in his remark, "It is inconceivable to me how any educated man can see relief from our present dangers, or from any dangers, in the direction of less education. Ignorance is a remedy for nothing." No less truly does he declare, "The cry should be, not Less intellect! Less study! Less culture!" but simply, "More heart! More prayer! More godliness! More subjection of culture to the salvation of those who have little or none of it!" But this last cry comes late; for in reading the Professor's statement of his ideal, my first feeling was of missing the divine spirituality, the superhuman energy, the heavenly fire, of an earlier teacher, who thus expresses his ideal, in his prayer for the Ephesian Christians, "That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit, in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

Here is strength supplied by the Holy Ghost;

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abounding strength; measureless and glorious as the inexhaustible riches of God. Here is the indwelling Christ; infusing and diffusing love through all the soul, making man capacious through his affections. Says Pascal, "God has designed that divine truths should pass from the heart into the head; and not from the head into the heart; and so, as it is necessary to know human things, in order to love them; it is necessary to love divine things, in order to know them." The education of candidates for the ministry ought to be shaped upon this truth. Professor Phelps deprecates as earnestly as any one, the overshadowing of the spiritual life by giving any *undue* prominence to the intellectual; but however just his intentions, our university system is too strong for him. It makes the men in its own image before it delivers them to him. It turns over to him Greeks and Romans. Men reared in the atmosphere of the ancients do not commonly acquire that vigor of Christian life, which characterized the great apostle to the Gentiles, and his fellow-helpers. The high culture of the universities has been carried to that extreme, that it leaves neither leisure, nor vigor, for proficiency in any channel but its own. It is time we had a system of education for the ministry that does not offer continuous temptation to self-seeking, and to a separation from the uncultured and the rude, which many men do not overcome. Admit that in the history of Greece and Rome, fitting occasions demanded the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero;

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admit that in the history of the Church of Christ there are occasions demanding sermons containing every element of power which scholarship and eloquence can supply. Such have been the sermons of Chalmers, Hall, Edwards, Griffin, Taylor, Beecher, and others. Crises have called for such sermons in the past; crises will call for such sermons again. But the ordinary wants of the masses do not call for orations; nor do they call for preachers using scholarship with the aim of an orator. They call for a man who, above and beyond all beside, is a servant of Jesus Christ, by the will of God; separated unto the Gospel; filled with the Holy Ghost; fervent and irrepressible; one who has a passion for *saving souls;* and an aptitude for training every member of his flock to be his fellow-helper in the work; one who values scholarship as it can be made helpful to this one object of his life.

Our own day has supplied men who have shown what can be done in working from this ideal. Richard Knill, John Angell James, and James Sherman found no gulf between themselves and the masses. Neither of the three could lay claim to "scholarship," or to "high culture." "Usefulness," says James, "was from the commencement the controlling idea of my ministry. If I have had any considerable influence with my people, it has come very much from my habit of showing them my heart." It was the same with Knill; he wept over a brutal soldier who cursed him for distributing tracts to his

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regiment, and his weeping brought the man to repentance. While he yet lived, one hundred of his spiritual children had entered the ministry. The tears running down the cheeks of Sherman melted a total neglecter of worship who chanced to step into his church; and hundreds were won by his loving spirit, beaming in his face. "Wherever he came his presence was sunshine," though "there was a tear in his voice." In short he was intensely and tenderly human and sympathetic. Eighty-four persons united with Surrey Chapel who referred their conversion to one sermon. Eighty persons at Reading were believed to have been converted by another sermon. All men cannot be eminent scholars. Not many men give sure evidence that their gift is to use their scholarship with the aim of an orator. But each man can, first, stir up *the* gift which is in him; second, can consecrate what he receives; third, can receive immensely — ay, he can be a temple *filled* with the Holy Ghost, if he makes no Dagon of his scholarship; and fourth, shall I say, *above all?* — if he will cultivate his affections; the great, conspicuous want, both in and out of the pulpit, in our day; fifth, if he will secure the largest baptism of love and will share it with all within his reach. The people will fully appreciate all the scholarship which is thoroughly subordinated to the service of the Master; but high culture is not the vital bond of union between pastor and people. As Sherman says, "they are jealous for the Lord of Hosts, lest talent should

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be exalted above godliness." They crave the heart-yearning tenderness, and the joyousness of one who has been much forgiven and knows it. Scholarship! for one who would see Jesus! If he ask *bread*, will you give him a *stone?*

No man is more mindful of all seemly culture than Paul; but somehow the culture he presses has another savor than that most often commended in our day. To the Romans he writes, "I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." To the Colossians he writes, "Since the day we heard of your love in the Spirit, we do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." To the Ephesians he writes, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God." This was his language to his fellow-helpers.

Here is the culture most needed; and this we may affirm has lost none of its transcendent power to persuade men. Scholastic culture has suffered great abatement of its power from the changes wrought in our times. Our university system is flagrantly out of harmony with the wants of the hour. The most that can be claimed for it is that it offers to develop *intellectual* powers, which when developed, provided

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the heart for it survives the process, can be turned to account in the pulpit. As to the affections, if they have vigor enough to survive ten or fifteen years' disuse, it permits them to exist. Can a sane man believe that this system, controlling its pupils from ten till twenty-five, will leave unimpaired that free, vigorous, spiritual life which in Paul breaks out thus, "For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be found in you." "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

Now this is something more than the ideal of a scholar using his scholarship with the aim of an orator. And we have no fear for such a man, but that, with great pains-taking, he will gather in all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which he can make auxiliary to the conversion and improvement of men. And we are sure that he will not hold books so near his eyes as to exclude from sight and sympathy all the world beside.

"I have yet to find," says the Professor, "the first layman who wants any other than the first order of intellect and the most perfect culture in his pastor."

True; but we want the first order of heart too; and in order to that, we want the evident and abundant anointing of the Holy Ghost. Is it not notoriously and alarmingly true that our congregations are

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learning to accept intellectual exhibitions containing a very small admixture of piety? Our urgent need is, of a style of man whose life is a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding less obviously from Helicon and Parnassus, than from the throne of God and the Lamb.

"Somehow or other, the theory of high culture is not working altogether right in practice. Christian men are innocently wondering and inquiring, why a less proportion of the uneducated masses (and of the educated) of American birth is to be found in Calvinistic churches than was found there thirty years ago."

In answer, I say: Nay, my brother; this is not the inquiry of intelligent Christian men, but of the ministry. The ministry wonder and innocently inquire, why the people are growing more and more intolerant of preaching? Have they fallen out with culture? Is culture of mind, of heart, of manners, — is universal culture less esteemed than formerly? O no! It is not that. It is that the times have been making earnest men; live men; men sensible of living powers, and that these powers are entrusted to them for use; men constrained and determined to invest these powers. They are investing them in all ways productive of tangible results. When they come to church they miss this intensity of life. They ask for heartiness like that to which they are used, and in place of it get only intellectual views. The ministry have not generally comprehended this, and

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so they are innocently wondering and inquiring whereunto this vast organization of lay-laborers is to grow? What is to come of Sabbath schools, Mission schools, Mission chapels, Young Men's Christian Associations, and so forth; wondering why "they either leave the clergy out of the question, or assign them to a false position."

The answer, as one of their own number has said, is "Because the ministry, for the most part, are firing from the stern, and bombarding Nineveh and Jehoshaphat." We are "creating vast organizations of lay-labor to reach the masses of the people" because of the admitted fact that "our pulpit as suited to our own wants and tastes" — i. e. the wants and tastes of congregations trained to glory in scholarship and oratory — "does not reach them." It is because some of those who once thronged the house of God have found out that Christ's work is their work, that they will no longer consent to yield one-seventh part of this productive life which is in them, this creative vigor, to the old time passivity, to the condition of suspended animation in the house of God, out of mere deference to traditional usage.

The phrase "My hearers," falling now and then upon the ear, suggests why the masses avoid the church. This is a positive age. The people are either with Christ or against him. They are more than hearers, or less. The former are fellow-helpers. They are earnestly co-operative, and choose to be so considered. Nor do they consider that their own

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wants and tastes, any more than the wants and tastes of the absentees, are met by the exhibition of truth as an intellectual treat. They want to see men converted to God, and roused to assume their share of life's work. It is in no small degree because the ministry as a whole are backward to recognize this energy of the age, and the movement of the Spirit, who inspires it, that "they are working away from the unscholarly masses," and also from those who are not unscholarly.

Professor Phelps says truly, that "no preacher can afford to be a mere teacher of teachers, reaching the people only by proxy." He refers with some solicitude to the young men of the Christian Associations, as seeming inclined to leave the ministry out of their Christian endeavors. To this, the young men would promptly reply: "Nothing could be further from our wish than to leave out the ordained ministers of Christ. Most earnestly have we desired their efficient co-operation, but we have made the same discovery you report, namely, that 'Somehow or other, their theory of high culture does not work altogether right in practice.' The most of them 'do not lift the masses,' — not even individual souls, — 'they simply soar overhead.' Holding on to old time methods of propounding abstract truth in high style they cannot help us to reach the masses, to whom we feel that we are commissioned to say, 'Come!' We will be the last to ask you to abate a jot from the true dignity of the minister of Christ; you shall be most

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welcome to enjoy all the real advantage of the highest scholarship, culture, and oratory; but if you are to be a power in our day you must both learn to speak to the masses in the language of their thought and feeling; and also by precept and example, to teach us to do the same."

No Church can be a strong Church, the members of which go from Sunday to Sunday to hear a great sermon, however good the sermon, and however devoted the minister, simply to sit in judgment on the sermon, to compare it with some former sermon, to admire its good points, and to extol the minister; and who, when some tokens of good appear, get together and vote that he, who is doing all, or nearly all that is done to save souls, shall be invited to double his toil and preach more sermons; all which is the natural and inevitable result of shrinking from educating lay-teachers, and leaving Church members to be mere passive recipients. The feeling of the honestly earnest will be: "If you cannot lay out work for us, and co-operate in it with us, you must pardon us, but we are bound to find work for ourselves. We are constrained to cry out with our illustrious predecessor in the apostleship, and week-day worker on tents, 'Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel!'"

Again and again under the influence of what may be called the high culture theory, a theory of saving the world by the preaching of the few, the Churches have come near to death from inanition. Had not our Lord come to the rescue with the suggestion of

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Sabbath Schools, Missions, Bible-work, Tract-work, Christian Associations and Conventions, in the working of which a field was found for individual Christians, the Churches would have perished. But, happily, "the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and *to every man his work.*" The problem of our day for each minister of Christ, is to interpret the Master's commission to each member of his flock.

The Young Men's Christian Association is simply an evolution of this idea. Long experience has shown that very *very* few young men will emerge from the overshadowing of their elders in the Church prayer-meeting. In younger companionship they find encouragement; they are absolved from fear. In the Lord's name, and for his sake, let every minister of Christ encourage them to develop their power to work, where they can, so they only develop it; for when developed it becomes the common property of all believers.

And this suggests to those who have too long limited their ministerial office and influence to the one channel of using scholarship with the aim of an orator, how they may acquire larger usefulness than ever before, while they diminish the wear and tear of mind and body. First: Let them hold each member of their flock to that personal service which friendly intercourse will reveal as being this work. And, second, let those who have hitherto drawn their dis-

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course chiefly from the domain of scholarship, begin to use the resources of a loving heart, and learn to overcome the immemorial reluctance of New England Christians to show their heart-life to those who are starved for lack of Christian sympathy. When once this is fairly done, "Reformers and Statesmen will be" less "inclined to look about for other agencies than those of the Church and pulpit to elevate and control" not only "the dangerous classes," but all classes. Consider the victims of the Papacy, for example. What will scholarship do for them? Love, outgushing, heart-moving love would save them. When this love shall pervade our preaching, "the secular press" will no longer "speak flippantly of the relations of the Protestant ministry to the masses."

Dear brethren in the ministry, and soon to be in the ministry, consider these things, and the Lord give you heavenly wisdom in dealing with them. "For a great door and effectual is opened" in these latter days both to ministers and to laymen, "and there are many adversaries" and work enough, and more than enough, for our united and entirely consecrated resources.

[In 1882, Rev. Dr. Austin Phelps gave to the press his admirable "Books and Men;" for those who will study and thoroughly digest, a treasury of most felicitous instruction and suggestion. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.]

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VII.

"I WILL."

TWO short words, once spoken by the Son of God, full of instruction. These were the circumstances: "There came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, 'If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.'" No disease more terrible than leprosy; none more hopeless of cure. But there was One able to save. He had but to will, and it was done. The petition was granted, the faith rewarded; "I will," said Jesus; "and immediately the leprosy was cleansed."

It is written in Genesis i. 27, "So God created man in his own image." Within the sphere which God has assigned to him, man has a power of will like that of Jesus. He who gave this power of will, gave also an endless succession of persuasives to use it for God and for humanity.

But there is an enemy of God and man, who also has this power of will; who makes it the business of his life to neutralize the Divine persuasives, and

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arrest or limit man's power of will. He is a cunning and accomplished enemy, and his success in his bad cause, beyond belief. Not a man has he failed to entangle in his snares; most men he holds entangled all their life; but here and there a man calls mightily on God and obtains deliverance. How is it with you, my brother? Have you learned to say, I will, and to *do* it, too? There are some memorable examples on record. Joshua was such an one. "As for me," he said, "I *will serve the Lord.*" The young princes in Babylon, Daniel and his companions, were of like spirit. "Be it known unto thee, O King," they said to Nebuchadnezzar, "that we *will not* serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." So spake Peter and John to the rulers and elders, and scribes: "We cannot but speak the thing which we have seen and heard."

Whether you are of this type of man, you may soon settle, by considering how you meet Satan's persuasives to conform to the customs of his vassals. Are you always looking about for plausible excuses for doing as others do? Or are you filled with inexorable determination to please God alone?

A great multitude of those who call themselves Christians are destitute of this Divine *Will* which wrought so mightily in Jesus and his faithful ones. They have will enough for earthly acquisitions, money, honor, pleasure; but very little will for durable riches and righteousness; plenty of will as regards their "*rights*," but feeble indeed is their will

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in respect to their privileges; a prompt "I will," and "I won't," when invited to self-indulgence, or to self-denial; but a dilatory will when asked for earnest co-operation in some movement to save and improve men.

Be not deceived, my brother; God is not mocked. Either your will is with his will, and like his will, or it is with, and like, Satan's will. You cannot serve two antagonistic masters. Either you have a Christ-like will, in virtue of which you are Godlike and sublimely good; or you are void of such will, and have no part in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

There need be no obscurity, no doubtfulness about this. There ought to be none. You may be a man of very moderate powers, but all the powers you have may be tremendously in earnest on the Lord's side. If you will keep your eye single in and for his service, your whole body, mind, and heart, may be *full of light.* Will you do it?

Here is a short catechism with which to examine yourself.

1. Do I love the Lord with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength? Do I show this by instantly and without regret sacrificing whatever comes between?

2. Do I seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness?

3. Do I hunger and thirst after righteousness?

4. Do I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord?

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Am I ready to take the loss of all things for his sake?

5. Do I love my neighbor as myself? and in all things please my neighbor for his good to edification?

6. Am I careful for nothing, but to please Christ, and have I learned in whatsoever state I am, to be therewith content?

Finally, If I must say No, to any of these questions, am I willing and resolved to will as Jesus wills? and to say, in His strength, I can and will do all things?

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VIII.

THE MINISTRY OF SALVATION.

HARDLY a newspaper comes to hand but one may find in it an admonition to the men of the world to be wise in their generation, and not fall behind the exigencies of our time. Here is the *London Times* exhorting Englishmen to take heed, lest like Austria they should be vanquished by "the progressive spirit" of their enterprising neighbors, who had not waited for a precedent before availing themselves of a magnetic communication with every part of their forces; and were totally indifferent to any who sneered, so they only obtained the knowledge they sought by sending an officer to reconnoitre from a balloon. Upon two points the French meant to be thoroughly posted: upon their own precise condition and resources, and upon the position and resources of those upon whom they were to operate. Knowing these points, they had only to set in motion the means which were fitted to the ends sought.

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One of the first among antiquated notions, of which our young ministers should disabuse themselves, is that success in the ministry follows by any necessary law from the passing of seven years in the College and Theological Seminary.

It is hard to get a hearing for the truth on this point. Demetrius and his craftsmen are all abroad in the land. One of the innocent errors of youth is to suppose that the best man and the best thing for any given occasion require but to be indicated to be at once employed.

McCreary's ink is said to be as good as Lightbody's, and perhaps better; but the good will of the pressmen is indispensable to the demonstration, and a fair trial was secured, in one instance at least, only by delivering the ink of the former in the cask of the latter. The sanction of the University and of the Theological School cannot reasonably be expected for any article not of their manufacture. That which has their *imprimatur*, it hardly need be said, is made in their own image and likeness.

Now to quarrel with any man for liking his own work would be worse than idle. It is one of the Divine Creator's special mercies to our race that each man shall like his own work; and we cannot pass the day-laborer as he turns up the soil, the woodman as he rough-hews his huge log, or even the merry cobbler who hardens both soles and knees with never-ceasing blows, without thanking God that he has made man to rejoice in the work of his hands.

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But some soils are too light; some logs are unsound, and many soles are every way unsatisfactory. We may judge of *these*, and who shall gainsay our right to discuss the *other* also.

The simple truth is, the Ministry of Salvation is *divinely* appointed; sometimes by and with the consent and concurrence of the Schools and the Councils, and sometimes in defiance of all their canons; and this for the best of reasons, namely, that the Lord hath need of them. An ass and a colt, the foal of an ass, are more to his purpose, when he requires them, than all the dromedaries of Midian or the polemic war-horses, whose necks are clothed with thunder, and who are too proud to do their proper work.

The ministry of the Gospel offers a wide field, upon which very various labors are to be performed. The special constables for literature are sworn to admit none but the odd-fellows or free-masons who can exhibit the distinguishing mark of their gridiron. But the men who have done the most good in the world — and many such are thus marked — have done such good, not because of their overweening estimate of the peculiar and exclusive characteristics of scholastic training, but because native good sense and the inspiration of the Almighty had taught them to subordinate the teachings of the schools to the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

Men often find themselves committed to forms of labor not at all suited to their gifts, on no better

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argument than that father, brothers, or friends happen to be so engaged. It demands nerve and a good deal of piety to back out of a mistake. But when a minister can find no evidence of that call to the ministry, well defined by one minister thus: "You want to preach, and the people want to hear you," how much better it is that he should engage in some calling which he can adorn than to bring reproach upon that holy service which not to honor is to degrade. Ministers, not a few, have destroyed their own happiness, and lowered the ministry of salvation in the esteem of the people, by a persistent belief, founded on a diploma (after repeated experiences that their ministry was wholly unacceptable), that *the people alone were in fault.*

Men of business do not thus blind themselves to truth. They hold their ministry to be a means to an end: that end is to make money. The business which will not make money is promptly abandoned. The ministry which will not win souls ought to be as promptly abandoned; or, at all events, modified to meet the exigencies of a ministry of salvation. The ministers of God are not those whom *men* have made such, but those whom *God* has made such. A great many men in business have been convinced by experience that they were not in their place, and have profited by the discovery. One who commenced life in the small and wearisome details of a domestic trade, turned his attention to shipping, and developed a commanding genius for commerce, in which

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he readily amassed a fortune. How good a workman the Tinker of Bedford may have been, it is too late to learn; but none can doubt that it was well for the world and for himself that he who was able to instruct the race in the most exquisite creations of Christian genius should leave pots and kettles to those who dreamed of nothing nobler. It is also true that one department of labor in the ministry is not always as well suited as some other, to any particular minister.

To a clerical friend, much and justly esteemed for his frank and pleasant address, for his warm-hearted and genial disposition, we once said, "We have many pleasant associations with the beginning of your ministry. We remember well those short, spirit-stirring, extemporaneous addresses you used to make in . . . vestry." "Oh! those were the days of my *puerile* efforts!" was the answer, given in a tone which said, "I beg you will understand that I have long since put away such childish things."

Now the truth is, those which he characterized as puerile efforts were the very efforts for which his Maker designed and fitted him. Warm-hearted, extemporaneous, not wholly unpremeditated, addresses were the very line of things in which he was every way fitted to succeed, and by which he could not fail to do good, though he might and would miss the applause which the craft bestow on "intellectual efforts" in which man has more voice and God less. Let such a man sell his true ministry for a garland of

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laurel, and his inward life will be darkened, his power to influence gone, and disappointment will begin to set her cloudy seal upon a brow that ought to be always irradiated by the sunshine of fervid love.

It must be admitted that in every considerable parish there will probably be some querulous, unworthy church members; men who would quarrel with the very chief of the apostles, were he their minister. It is surely not less true that there are ministers not a few who misapprehend their true sphere, and miss the usefulness and the happiness within their reach. The man who was made to be an affectionate, judicious, and eminently useful pastor, under the overmastering influence of a teacher who has no special gift nor affection for this sphere, may be led to depreciate pastoral labor, as compared with laborious writing, and so to throw away the opportunities he has, making vain attempts to shine in a light which he has not; to emit beams which he cannot borrow.

Could anything be more absurd than for Whitefield to lay himself out to instruct a Bishop Butler or a Jonathan Edwards in the logic of clear reasoning? But Whitefield might do even such men immense good by one of his tender and fervent appeals. Is it not then apparent that there is no little danger that many a good man will fail in the Christian ministry, not for the want of resources, but from not knowing what his resources really are, or from

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weakly admitting the persuasion that no resources are worthy to be employed but those which have the stamp of supereminent intellectual ability?

Every Christian has some real ability to do good; and all who will "follow God as dear children," may certainly know wherein their ability lies. To what purpose do we talk of faith in God, if we may not, or will not trust in him for so much as this? Has he not said, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him"? The man who really goes to God for wisdom — prejudging nothing — but following him as an affectionate child, cannot but be useful, and very useful. He is a light set upon a candlestick, a city upon a hill; he cannot be hid, but must be seen, and so seen as to compel men to glorify his Father in Heaven. Such a man will never subordinate the life of God in the soul of man to any theory. Promptly admitting that theories of doctrine and measures have their value and convenience, as in a dark night carriage-lanterns may throw light upon a road hitherto untravelled, or upon one many times travelled, yet will he ever reckon them of small worth except as held in complete subordination to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Our age is an age of intense vitality. The railroad and the electric telegraph are but the efflorescence of that life. It is all-pervasive; revealing itself in mechanics, in manufactures, in commerce, in scientific movements; and it is fostered by the

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abundant rewards lavished upon it, and quickening it, if possible, to yet greater intensity. Every one knows this to be true of secular affairs; for that is a kingdom which comes *with observation*, and challenges attention at every turn, at all hours, with an earnestness and a pertinacity of appeal that defies insensibility. Men must see, hear, feel, and be influenced, whether they will or not. Now while such is the case in all that pertains to secular affairs, what has been gained to the ministry of eternal life? It may not be denied that there is here and there one in a State, or ten on a continent, who are fully awake to the comparison invited; who mean to be heard, and will be heard; who are as vital and as powerful as the highest and best in the secular world, and as much more, as spiritual life is superior to natural life. And there are more who, without anything like a national influence, are too much in earnest and too sensible to fail of an attentive hearing; but passing by this limited number of preachers, who could be truly represented as not a whit behind the age, it will appear to be true that the great majority of preachers do not command and do not expect for the Gospel of God, anything like the interest accorded to the most emphatic secular appeals. What men neither command nor expect to attain they of course do not labor for. The majority of the ministry appear to look upon it as a foregone conclusion that the clamorous appeals of politics, and of "one-idea" reform, and the six days' thun-

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der of business and worldliness in general, is not to be contended with; that if the ministry get the fraction of what there is left of a man, after or over and above this, they do well; that so it has been in times past, and so it must needs be in all coming time; that men will crowd the marts of commerce, crowd the popular lecture-room, and throng the places of public amusement and the political arena, and devour with eagerness every forcible appeal to the natural man, but that the Gospel must needs be dispensed to only here and there a willing ear, a fraction only of the moderate congregation usually assembled in the house of God.

Why are the speakers heard so attentively in the one place, and with so little attention in the other? The facile answer of a majority of ministers is, "Oh, that is simply because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." The answer is the answer of the natural man; it is a gross libel on the race. For though the sentence is true in itself, yet, as thus quoted, it is more wicked than is at all conceived by those who so thoughtlessly assign it.

Let us keep to the fact, and what is the fact? It is that the man who first of all gives himself soul, body, and spirit wholly away to God, consecrating all to the advancement of his Kingdom — the man who gives to Christ the whole wealth of an ardently loving heart, acquires a power in handling the word of life that nobody can view without deep interest,

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ay, the very deepest interest possible to a human heart.

The secret of the persuasive power of those who, in *any department* of knowledge, influence the great congregation, is in their promptly renouncing all reliance upon any prescriptive right to be heard; in their making themselves thoroughly cognizant of the mental whereabouts of their hearers; in their lively sensibility to, and sympathy with the living hearts before them; and in the determination and energy with which they throw themselves into the endeavor to instruct and influence them. They have no reliance upon any dead language, vernacular or other. Theirs is the living language of an earnest soul, to souls known and felt to be capable and probably ripe for deep sympathy with their own earnestness. Their speech is, in effect, actual conversation, into which the speaker more or less perceptibly introduces the responses of his hearers. It used to be said of Dr. Lyman Beecher, when he first settled in Boston, and with truth, "No sooner did an objection to one of his statements or arguments arise in your mind than he named it, and replied to it." And the reading of the Scriptures permits — nay, it not only permits, it *demands*, in simple justice to the word of God, that the reading be such as in this way to speak continually to the inmost soul of the hearer.

Could a man read a warm-hearted letter from his wife, a letter charged with messages of love to each of their children, in such wise as to permit them to

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be less than thoroughly alive and tender to all its sentiments? Nay, disguise it as we may, there must first of all be treason in the preacher's own soul — his own love must be twice dead, or it will be a contagious influence, not to be eluded or repelled. Let men excuse their failures to themselves as they will, seeking to throw the blame anywhere but on themselves — the spiritually-minded know better. This, of course, will be unpalatable truth. Were ministerial success contingent wholly or chiefly upon great talents, it might well be said, This is a hard saying, who can hear it? But as the success of *every man who is called of God* to the ministry, depends solely upon single-hearted, whole-souled consecration to Christ, it is not only not unkind, but it is the only true kindness to affirm and to re-affirm it. The promise of Christ — his largest promises are to those who leave *all and follow him.* All things work together for good to him who does this. Until you have done this you have not done what you could; and you have no right to lay the blame of failure in your ministry — no right to lay the sin of a very limited success in your ministry, elsewhere than at your own door.

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IX.

TRACT PREACHING.

OUR Lord's command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," includes every form of preaching that is fitted to communicate the Gospel. Evidently the disciple in each age is to interpret his Lord's command according to the facilities which his age affords. The simple talk of Jesus, of what he said, and what he did, uttered and recorded by the first disciples, is the common privilege of all disciples in all the ages. When a better education than that which fell to Matthew, Mark, and Peter, is given, the receiver ought to turn to the Master's use every facility this better education supplies. He who has access to the press ought to use the press. And since, in our day, all may use tracts and books, all ought to use them.

Christian men and women are too ready to hold themselves excused from preaching the Gospel; too ready to avail themselves of the excuse supplied by that traditional and prevailing notion of preaching

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which limits it to the pronouncing of a discourse from a text in a pulpit. To allow this interpretation is to relax the hold which our Lord's command has on every conscience and on every heart; it is to annihilate the hope his promise was intended to inspire; namely, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." This promise, like the promise of safety to Paul and his fellow-voyagers, is conditional upon the faithful endeavors of all the disciples.

My dear brother, sister, child, how can you, with confident expectation, look forward to a share in the heavenly joy of those who have abounded in the work of the Lord, if, on any plea, you excuse yourself from such preaching of the Gospel as he has offered to you? Do you say, "Oh! I could never bring myself to give tracts to people; I have an invincible repugnance to it; I know they do not wish them; and, besides, I do not feel sure that they would do any good"? Do you not see that your excuse, if allowed, would stop all preaching? The minister in his pulpit might yield to the repugnance which at one time or another comes upon him to press some obligation which he knows ought to be met, which is not met, which is most unwelcome to the ears and to the hearts of some in his congregation. Shall he spare ›wn feelings, and preach only smooth things? ›e not rather cry mightily to God for strength ›me his repugnance? Shall he serve God ›osts him nothing?

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You are not sure, you say, that the tracts, if given, would do any good. You would never say this were you actively engaged in the work. Your own delightful experience would soon assure you. Said a friend lately, in answer to my request for facts, "Take this for one: Within three years, *twenty-five* persons have said to me, 'I was led to Christ by a tract you gave me.'" Not long since, I had a letter from a stranger in the country, as follows: "On your way to F——, you handed 'Have You Found God?' to a very dear friend of mine, who was not then a Christian. The little tract was read with deep interest; and I am happy to tell you that I believe God is now found by that friend." To an invalid, I sent a number of tracts for her distribution among her visitors. One of these she sent to a fellow-sufferer who has since gone to her rest. Before her departure, she wrote, "That tract led me to Christ." Another writes, "I inclosed 'The Comforter' in a letter to an army-chum of mine; and he came a hundred miles to tell me of the blessing it brought him and to praise and pray." While conversing with a friend in the cars, I noticed in the seat behind us a thoughtful face, and handed to the person, "Why You should be a Christian." After a few moments' reading, she leaned forward, and said, "When you have finished your conversation, I should like to speak with you." I went at once into her seat; and she said, "I have always wished to be a Christian; but I do not know the way." This, of

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course, led to an endeavor to make the way as simple and clear to her apprehension as might be.

Can you have a doubt either of the suitableness or of the bounden duty of holding yourself ready to stimulate and to encourage inquiry for the way of life? And can you for a moment indulge the idea, that the existence of the order of the clergy exonerates the individual disciple from the obligation everywhere to enact the part of a loyal, loving, earnest friend of Christ, sworn to preach his Gospel to every creature?

"But," you say, "though I do not deny the obligation in one way or another to preach the Gospel to every creature, I am sure that our gifts differ; and that what one man would do well, another would not do as well, and probably not at all well. For myself, I must declare that I could not do this particular work. I am glad to have it done; I believe, with you, that it is adapted to do much good. Many a person will read a short, simple, conversational appeal in print, who would not give you an opportunity to say the same things to him in any other way; and I would encourage every one who feels himself called to engage in the work to persevere and abound in it."

Very well, brother, you are one of the friends whose cordial support we are glad to avail ourselves of. For your own sake, I am sorry that you can not personally engage in tract-giving: for the influence of this work on the man who abounds in it, quicken-

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ing his zeal, intensifying his love and faith and courage and skill in doing good, is very great; but if you cannot avail yourself of this privilege, then we shall be glad to introduce to you hundreds and thousands of men, women, and children, who will bless you for the money you will give us, and who will take upon them this precious work of tract-preaching, and, as your representatives, will scatter the little messengers of salvation all over the land. Here is Brother Moody of Chicago, entreating us no longer to dole him out tracts by the spoonful, but to give them by tons for the evangelization of the waste places in the West. I asked him, "How is dear Brother Burnell getting on?" "Oh! poor fellow," he replied, "he has been all along the line of the Pacific Railroad, doing what he could with his voice; but he could get no tracts to scatter. I remember, when I began this work, I used to buy a quarter of a dollar's worth at a time; and my quarters were soon gone, and then I had to stop."

Brother, will you let Jesus Christ's laborers stop for lack of a tract? — for lack of means to procure them? Do you not know that the servants of Satan are untiring in their tract-preaching? — that they go everywhere scattering *his* words? *Will you permit the rich soil of human hearts in this broad land to be filled with tares, when it is in your power to have it filled with good seed?* In the name of Him who went about doing good, whose whole life was a life of self-denying, self-sacrificing devotion to the work of sav-

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ing and sanctifying the souls of men, we implore you to give us the means of so reducing the cost of tract-preaching as to make it available even to the poorest. There are multitudes of noble men, women, and children too, who delight in this work, who stand ready to make it immeasurably more useful, but who are now restrained by the cost of doing so. Take a hint, we pray you, from Peter Drummond, the seedsman of Stirling, who from a single tract which he was impelled to get out to meet a crying sin, has gone on to hundreds, and from handfuls to tons. Take a hint from Henry Bewley of Dublin, who, out of an income of forty thousand pounds a year, is said to devote thirty-nine thousand pounds to the multiplication and cheapening of religious tracts; so that five neat little pocket tracts on colored paper are sold for a penny, four-fifths of the cost of the tract being paid by this charitable friend.

Brother, you know the love of our Lord Jesus Christ; that he was rich, and made himself poor for us. How much owest thou thy Lord? Take counsel of thy love for him; and what thy hand finds to do, what thy heart impels thee to do, do it as for the Lord Christ.

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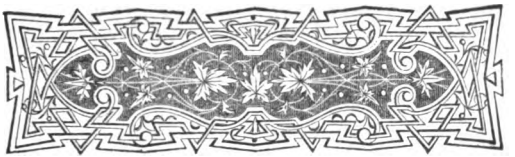

X.

A SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY.

A SUCCESSFUL ministry! Momentous words; momentous idea. Can I hope so to deal with it as to give no just occasion for complaint? as to encourage those who ought to hope for and to expect such a ministry? as to lighten the burdens of some who are grievously oppressed? as to bring honor and service to Christ from quarters where it is now withholden? Surely the endeavor to do this may crave the indulgence of all.

Who then is a successful minister of Christ? Is it not he who in an eminent degree attains the object which Christ sought? This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He came to save and to sanctify. The testimony of the redeemed corroborates this: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests."

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Now a king — such a king as is here portrayed — is a conqueror, and a priest is a worshipper; and the victory is not merely over flesh and blood, but over principalities and powers, over the rulers of the darkness of this world, and over spiritual wickedness in high quarters; and the successful minister is he who leads on the people of his charge to such victories. He is therefore more than a preacher, more than a pastor; he is a general officer appointed to the command of his section of the army of the Lord. His commission combines and blends this threefold service. This is palpably involved in our Lord's last command to the whole body of disciples: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Observe how comprehensive is the command; it is given to all believers, in the behalf of all nations, and includes all things which Christ has enjoined. It lays claim to the total ability of every disciple, to his interior as well as outspoken life. It summons us to that unity of life with Christ without which it is impossible to teach all nations the lessons of Christ. It involves reproof, rebuke, warning, instruction, exhortation, entreaty, and long-suffering. It most certainly demands that thorough and heart-pervading appreciation of the Gospel of Christ without which no man can be its fearless champion, its intelligent and persuasive advocate, and most obviously necessitates a

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ministry with manifold gifts, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. And this body is not one member, but many, which God has attempered together to the intent that the members should have the same care one for another.

That then is a successful ministry, which, recognizing our divine Master's care for the body, secures the health of the body in securing the healthy exercise of the gift of each member. And he will be neither a successful nor a happy minister who leaves the gifts of the members unused, either because of omitting to demand and to draw out such use, or because of a mistaken substitution of some other thing in the place of that use. And that is an unsuccessful ministry, which permits the members of the body to lose the sense of a vital relation to the body. In the true sense of success, there can be no more unsuccessful ministry than that which fills the house of worship with mere hearers, with those who are made conscious of little or no responsibility for the conversion and edification of their fellow-worshippers.

Every right-minded man in contemplating the gospel ministry, knows that he is to bring both mind and heart to his work. He knows that great demands will be made upon the one and upon the other. He has, perhaps, his misgivings as to the possibility of meeting these demands; and withal a

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judgment, or at least a conjecture, as to which of these demands will tax him most severely. He would give much to know how he may marshal these respective forces most effectively. If he has learned the use of prayer as he ought, he will pray earnestly for Divine guidance. As an intelligent and faithful servant of Jesus Christ he must strongly desire to succeed in his ministry, and therefore the question, how may a successful ministry be secured? must always be to him a problem of the deepest interest.

This is a question for the people, no less than a question for the minister; because the principle of demand and supply operates here, as indeed it must needs do everywhere. What the people now demand must in no inconsiderable degree be referred to what they have hitherto received. Whether they will hereafter improve in their demands, under God, lies very much with the ministry of the day to decide.

Evidently this is a question in which we have a common momentous interest, and the discussion of it, in love to God and men, cannot fail to be attended with profit.

Possibly there may be in some a disposition to shrink from this discussion. Why? because, as we all know, there are men who greatly dislike the discussing of questions which may tend to disturb established customs. They are haunted by the fear that in flying from the evils which we know, we may be landed in greater evils that we know not of. Moreover, there are men with little reverence for

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anything established, who incline to think that almost any change must be for the better; and we cannot but fear that in their zeal to pull up tares, such men will pull up the wheat with them.

Nevertheless, we cannot let this matter alone, if we would, for it is a matter of such universal concern that it will present itself; it claims and will have discussion. And if it be not discussed by those who have given much thought and prayer to it, why then it will even fall into the hands of those who have given to it little of either.

To-day it is admitted on all hands, that the interest in Church services is less than it once was, far less than it ought to be. The principal cause of this is the perversion of the pulpit from the true intent, namely, the cultivation of the religious sentiment, from the development of the love, reverence, and worship of God. This has been gradual, and not intentional, but incidental. It came under the wing of an angel of light; it was in the beginning simply a strong desire for intellectual progress; a vigorous determination that religious knowledge should not fall behind other knowledge; that the statement of religious truth should lack nothing of the originality and force which characterizes and recommends the best representations of secular science. It was thus the present prevailing manner of inculcation was brought in. It is philosophy rather than religion; its forms of thought and modes of presentation are far more human and rationalistic, than divine and

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authoritative. It is the appeal of one head to another, not the wrestling of one heart with another; and still less is it the burning utterances of God's heart, fitted by the transmission of a sympathetic human soul to storm and carry every defence opposed to it. The preaching God bids us preach, is the will of God lovingly received, and then lovingly imparted. The knowledge of that will comes of intimate communion with God and the Lamb; and there is and can be no substitute for the knowledge so derived. It is the peculiar property of the believer who has simply and heartily embraced the promise of the Comforter; who has gladly placed himself under his tuition; who has intelligently received the Holy One as his honored and beloved guest; who simply, unhesitatingly, and constantly asks and receives his guidance, and lives in the assurance and sunlight of his favor.

I am led to believe that no small part of the acknowledged difficulties besetting the question of a successful ministry, arises from one or two assumptions which lack support.

The first of these is, that the preaching which now prevails is the identical preaching of which it is written, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believed;" and that it is also the very preaching enjoined upon us in Mark xvi. 15.

Preaching is thus defined by Dr. Webster:—

1. To pronounce a public discourse on religious subjects, or from a text of Scripture. The word is

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usually applied to such discourses as are formed from a text of Scripture.

2. To discourse on the Gospel way of salvation, and exhort to repentance; to discourse on evangelical truths, and exhort to a belief of them and acceptance of the terms of salvation. This was the extemporaneous manner of preaching pursued by Christ and his apostles; Matt. iv., x. Acts x., xiv.

The first of these definitions is evidently the definition of preaching now almost universally received. It is in marked contrast to the preaching of our Saviour and of his apostles. Preachers of the present day agree in confessing much disappointment in the result of their labors. In looking for the origin of this disappointment in the result of preaching, it is natural to compare the present with the former preaching, and to inquire if the loss of power may not be attributed to the change. It is written that great multitudes followed Jesus; that many believed under his preaching, and also under the preaching of his apostles. What sufficient motive can be assigned for departing from that preaching which accomplished the great object of preaching, the conversion of men to God.

I could wish that this question might have its answer just here from the pen of some one of the ablest vindicators of the modern method; but, as that is not attainable, I shall endeavor fairly to state the motives which seem to me most likely to be alleged by such an advocate.

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I suppose it would be said, that to the advocacy of the Gospel, every power of persuasion employed for the furtherance of any good thing should be brought; that the power of persuasion varies with the characteristics of the ages; that the people addressed by our Saviour and his disciples were, in the main, a simple and unlettered people; that they adopted the mode of preaching best suited to the men of their time; and that there is every reason to believe that were they now on the stage of life, they would adopt the mode of preaching best suited to the men of our time; that as learning, logic, rhetoric, and the force of eloquence are now most formidably arrayed for the furtherance of every science, so, and with more reason, for the furtherance of the Gospel, should every power of man be to the utmost developed by the discipline of the schools; that as error is more and more fortifying herself with all manner of earthworks, so, and much more, ought divine science to avail herself of every possible advantage; that though "a sling and smooth stones from the brook" might be well enough for primitive warfare, quite another style of weapon is indispensable to the times in which we live, against the adversaries with whom we contend; that as by the discipline of modern education our people are raised to a high plane in relation to every natural science, the teaching of the pulpit should come up to that plane.

Doubtless much more could be said in the same strain; but I may hope to escape even the appear-

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ance of injustice, if I content myself with this brief mention of what I suppose to be the drift of the argument.

There can be no question that the educational advantages of our day have imposed upon all candidates for the ministry, obligations once unknown. And while no certain and unalterable rule can be laid down as to the years and the studies which must be taken up in the way of preparation for the ministry, by every man, it may now, as formerly, be broadly stated that a bishop must be apt to teach, one that ruleth well his own house, and no novice; having the sense to avoid foolish and unlearned questions, gentle, patient, and meek in instructing those that oppose themselves to his work. But the reasons assigned for departing from our Lord's manner of preaching — either those above named or any that have come to my knowledge — do not carry my conviction. I nowhere find warrant for such departure, either in specific precept, or in any general principle obviously covering and including such precept. Nor have educational advantages wrought such modifications in man's susceptibility to impression, conviction and conversion, as to demand the change. Our Lord's methods of instruction have not been superseded by the progress of science in any one of its departments. The sacred Record is therefore our authoritative guide in searching for an answer to the question, what is the preaching which our Lord enjoined when he pronounced that last command, "Go

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ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

The first Gospel use of the term *preaching* seems to be that in the announcement of Christ's coming by Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek;" quoted by the Saviour thus: "He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the *poor*;" A Gospel for the poor must needs be a language so simple as to be intelligible to the uneducated. Accordingly we find the forerunner and herald of Christ preaching thus: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The poorest could understand that. Jesus himself repeated this very preaching: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He went about all Galilee repeating this sermon. And when the multitudes gathered to hear him, he gave them a longer sermon, but equally simple, equally intelligible to the poorest and the meekest. It was an exceedingly practical sermon; in fact, a simple statement of duty and of privilege, given in the language, and — without a question — in the very tones of common familiar conversation.

Now with what show of reason can it be assumed that an original metaphysical disquisition, a scholastic expansion of three lines, or of three words, from some isolated text, is that preaching which Christ enjoined, and also illustrated, throughout his ministry? For example, in the "repent ye," already quoted; in the sermon on the mount; in his sharp

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rebukes of the Scribes and Pharisees; in his parables; and everywhere in the evangelists, — evidently our Lord's first and only concern was to impart the precise lesson needed by his hearers. He was at no pains to construct a logical and rhetorical disquisition of any kind. From the earliest ages it has ever been his way to send men who could deliver his messages to the people in this same simple, straightforward manner; and with what success we know. Even truant Jonah, angry Jonah is witness to the efficacy of this kind of preaching. "O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled to Tarshish; for I know that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil." Which is equivalent to saying, "I knew that if I preached the preaching thou bad'st me, it would persuade the Ninevites, belie my words, and save the city." Such a preacher was Joshua, when, acting under his divine commission, he preached his memorable sermon, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." And such was Elijah when he preached to Ahab and to all Israel from Mount Carmel. And so when Jesus sent forth the seventy to preach repentance, faith, peace and salvation, they returned with joy, rejoicing in a successful ministry. So in Jerusalem at the day of Pentecost, in Samaria, in Cæsarea, and Damascus, Ephesus, Athens, Corinth, Rome, — everywhere in short, — some believed, and some doubted, but multitudes were added to the

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Lord; and all this resulted from preaching the preaching the Lord bade. I know it is common to impute the success of these men of God in the older times to their miraculous gifts. But this way of accounting for their success betrays a pitiable materialism, a most melancholy skepticism, a shocking unbelief in God's unchanging fidelity to his ministers. Has he not said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?"

Will you venture to say, God in those former days considered the unbelief of their hearers, and armed the disciples with superior powers, supplying all their need, giving them those gifts which were essential to their success? To-day he has not done so. We have no miraculous powers; it is therefore not our fault that our preaching fails of an equal measure of success.

The second melancholy and mischievous assumption is, that for our day the chief want of the minister of Christ is stores of learning and great intellectual vigor and originality. It is often said, "only by unwearied study, can any man sustain himself in the pulpit; none but the thorough student can hope to maintain his hold upon his audience." But how seldom are the claims of the spiritual life urged! When is it said, None but he who keeps his own heart with all diligence, none but he who lives in most intimate communion and fellowship with God and the Lamb, can reach and benefit the hearts of those over whom the Holy Ghost hath made him

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overseer? And yet the want of success in the ministry must be mainly referred to the lack of oneness with Christ. Ask any intelligent Christian in the world, "Who of all men, exerts the best influence on you?" and his prompt answer will be, "The man whom I esteem the holiest man of all I know."

The man whose first concern is to sustain himself in the pulpit by forcible presentations of original thought, is under a constant temptation to sacrifice the best interests of his people to a supposed necessity to himself. He is no less exposed to the temptation to sacrifice his own best interests to a supposed necessity of the people. The truth is, there is one, and but one supreme necessity; namely, "to be filled with the knowledge of Christ's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge and love of God." This necessity swallows up all others, and the man who really surrenders himself — soul, body, mind, and heart, — to the claims of this necessity will, if he be a sensible and large-souled man, find all his minor wants covered and included in this. His communications from the Lord to his people will be freshened from the *heart* rather than from the intellect; and yet, if any one thinks that the intellect of the minister will fall behind that of the mere scholar, he errs egregiously, for the intellect is ever a debtor to the heart for more than it can pay.

Is not the complaint often made that the people

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nowadays are sadly deficient in reverence? Is it not sometimes said, The ministry are losing ground; their influence is much less than in former times? But was there ever more honor shown to intellect? Was learning ever more bepraised than now? How is it that ye cannot discern the signs of the times? It is because the ministry have permitted themselves to be beguiled by misleading representations of the comparative worth of natural science, and to be drawn away from the simplicity of the Gospel, and from the love of Christ, that they have lost ground. Is it not true, dear friends, to your own consciousness, that the preaching of our day lacks the tone of God's voice? Does it not lack the savor of his presence? Can you conceive of the Son of God as addressing dying men in the customary language of the modern pulpit? Is it not too true that the preaching, with rare exceptions, commends the preacher, rather than the Master? How, indeed, under the prevailing system of education, can it be otherwise? For ten, fifteen, or it may be twenty years, the future preacher is subjected to a training whose avowed and exclusive object is to enable him to do credit to himself and to his alma mater, as a mathematician, logician, rhetorician or poet. His future occupation is not ignored, but proposed to him as a profession in which his success is to depend upon his proficiency in the several departments of human science, precisely as the success of any other man so depends. Of course the sharpest discriminations of the class-room

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are neither to be ignored nor undervalued by the minister of God; but they are to be subordinated by the ceaseless reminder, these are the bones, the dry bones, upon which it behooves you to prophesy; but if the Spirit of God breathes not upon them, they will have no more efficacy to win the hearts of men, than skeletons to win the love of timid children.

That this conviction is not generally established, is to be inferred with certainty from the infrequent use made of the preacher's own spiritual experience. An eminent preacher on being asked if he ever preached or prayed beyond his own experience, answered: "If I did not, you would have poor preaching and praying." Now is it not entirely apparent that to preach and pray beyond one's own experience can tend only to poverty? So long as in preaching and in praying, he keeps to what his own experience witnesses, the preacher speaks with an irresistible power; exceeding that he begets doubt, both as to what he does believe, and also of its worthiness to be believed. How unlike must a questionable and uncertain testimony be to that of the beloved John! "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the father and with his son Jesus Christ." Jesus says of such disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world; if the salt have lost its savor" — can there be any doubt that godliness is that savor? — "it is henceforth good for nothing

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but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." The prevailing preaching has in it a grain of salt — the text — but how rarely does it pervade the mass of the discourse; how rarely is it felt to pervade the soul of the speaker. Too often it is but a motto to an essay, which is to bring credit to the writer as a man of originality, of reading, of logic, rhetoric, imagination, or what you will but the fruit of intimate communion with the Lord, and an over-mastering concern to win every one of his hearers to the largest measure of the same blessedness.

That the pulpit needs all the intellectual power that can be can be called to its service is too plain to be denied. Still it remains true that the want of intellectual power is not our greatest want. The fiftieth Psalm applies to us as truly as to the ancient Israelites. "I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the fields are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell thee; for the world is mine and the fulness thereof." God is in no respect dependent upon our powers or researches. He has declared most explicitly, over and over again, that our strength is in him; and pre-eminently that our power is in Christ; in God manifested in the flesh. The true reason for the diminished and unsatisfying results of preaching is to be found in the fact that preachers and hearers are so little in the set; in that Christ and his Spirit are so little as the suc
course the sh "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of

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Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." But the Gospel of Christ is not an intellectual doctrine; it is a *life*, and its power is in that life. Christ was the very Word of God, the visible audible utterance of the very life of God; and it was not until he had secured this life to man that he said, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." And yet men who have little or none of this life, wonder that their endeavors to save men are of so little avail; wonder, in effect, that they do not impart a life which they themselves do not possess. They have, in truth, never "separated themselves unto this wisdom." Nor is it strange that they have not, when the influence of our educational system is considered; for in the first place, our educational system from the beginning to the end, is an unyielding mould. Our youth of whatever metal are to be run in this mould. They are to be formed to one pattern, and that pattern is not Christ, but the commanding minds most deferred to in the several schools of learning.

1. The characteristic mould or type in our day, is nicety in metaphysical discrimination, and logical and rhetorical ability in the application of such discrimination, to the handling of a text of Scripture.

2. Success in this line of things cannot in reason regard the conversion of man to God, as more than an incidental result, of *probable* occurrence.

3. The way of progress in such success is very unlike glorying in the Cross of Christ. So far from

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enabling the preacher to forget himself in his devotion to Christ, it makes an inexorable demand upon him ever to remember the metaphysical rock from whence he was hewn, and to see that he does no discredit to his origin.

4. To preach Christ and him crucified demands precisely that for which Christ prayed; "Sanctify them through thy truth; that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be ONE IN US; *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*" How unlike is this to reliance upon intellectual ability in essay writing! The power to convince and to convert men is declared to be mainly in *the manifest union* of the disciple to his Lord.

5. The evil in our educational system is a self-perpetuating evil; because each teacher, by his yearly routine, is evermore confirming himself in his preference for experts in his own line of things. So long as the professional bias of such minds is not controlled by a superabounding devotion to Christ and his Cross, how can they do otherwise than go on creating men in their own image? And thus it comes about, that much of the preaching of our day is so far the mere product of the intellect, that an unconverted man might preach it as readily as any other. It does not demand that a man should be "filled with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;" nor insist that "he walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being

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fruitful in every good work." It loses sight alike of "the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness," of the love of God in "setting forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in His blood," and of sanctification through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. It does not search out the present wants of every heart, and minister Christ as the sufficient supply for that want, the bread of life to every man.

How indeed can any man so recommend Christ who has not himself so lived upon Christ? The power of the minister of Christ is in his being able to testify that he has himself found Christ, and found him able to save to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him. And not only to save them from future final perdition, but also to supply all their present need; to fill and to satisfy every longing of the heart. When the speaker has himself evidently abandoned all for Christ, then his recommendation to his hearers to do so, is enforced by an irresistible argument. That logic and rhetoric do not convert men is a matter of notoriety, and of frequent and sorrowful confession. "Somehow our preaching fails to secure the results we desire"; and men look here and there for the cause of the failure. Sometimes it is charged upon the people, that an itching ear for novelties is the neutralizing force. On the other hand, sometimes the preacher is accused of indolence, or lack of eloquence. Were a convention of ministers and people called together, doubtless

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each would be ready to refer the evil to some fault in the other; and without doubt the existing evil may be referred to the one as well as to the other.

It is not to be denied that the people have very generally come to demand a preacher in whom they can glory as being original, logical, learned, or eloquent, above other men; in anything, in short, but that he is a simple-hearted man of God, "who will not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, speaking the truth in love, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." It is, alas, only too well understood, that wide departures from the explicit and unmistakable teachings of our Lord are to be ignored, or endured, in consideration of the eloquence or the originality of the candidate for the pulpit.

Does not this account for the inefficacy of the prevailing methods of preaching, that men ask and receive not simply and evidently what God has said, but variations upon some scriptural theme, in the progress of which the theme may now and then be recognized; but that which specially interests us, is the preacher's ingenuity in extracting from it so much that would never, by any possibility, have occurred to us? Is there any just ground for wonder that *such* preaching fails to convert men to God? So far from being the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, is it not the logic, rhetoric, and learning of the

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schools, the elaborations of man's wisdom? How many men in a hundred could truly say with John Angell James, "I set out in my ministry, even when a student, with the idea of *usefulness* so deeply imprinted on my heart, and so constantly present to my thoughts, that I never lose sight of it long together; and I mean usefulness of one kind, that is, the direct conversion of souls."

What shall be thought of the multitudes of preachers, who, professing to believe themselves moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them this office, are content to go on in a way that fails to conduct them to this desired result? What can we think, seeing as we do, that no parallel to this course can be found in the whole range of human endeavor? In every other department of effort the thing that will not effect its object is abandoned. Is it to be believed that in pleading with men to be reconciled to God, there is neither sun nor star to shed a ray of light upon our pathway; but that we must needs stumble on forever, referring the failure of our unproductive labor to the sovereignty of God?

Unspiritual ministers will no doubt persist in their discouraging endeavors in one way and another, to account for, or to submit to, the average results of the scholastic methods of treating Bible texts. But surely it is high time for spiritually-minded men to begin to realize that the promise of the Holy Ghost was given to all believers; and that those who wait, expect, and earnestly pray for this transcendent gift,

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will be endowed with power from on high, and their labor will not be in vain in the Lord.

If the present system of education for the ministry of salvation, did but secure at once the greatest ability to get near to men, and inspire the determination to use that nearness to impart both the words and the spirit of Christ, it would be unreasonable to complain of it; but so long as its pupils come to us in the character of essayists, rather than in that of ambassadors of Christ, whose credentials are most evidently from the Master, we cannot but demand, How long will you persist in exhausting and fruitless endeavors? In the words of Mr. James, "without the unction which spirituality of mind alone can impart, your most elaborate sermons will be like the cold beams of a wintry moon, falling upon the icy bosom of the frozen lake."

It is to be feared that many and many a man goes into the Christian ministry because it is a position of dignity and honor, because of the intellectual occupation it offers, and not because he has a passion for saving souls, and for building up Christians in faith and holiness. Ground for this fear is found in their neglect of such endeavors while yet in training for the ministry. With the ardent desire to be always doing good, the desire to secure the most perfect training for future usefulness could combine; and the effect would surely be to impel the student upon So fair-school, Bible-class, prayer meeting, and all God, is fforts. "All this," to quote Mr. James

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again, "would keep up the divine life, and increase his fervor for saving souls, while it would give a habit and facility for free speech, and render him, when he becomes a preacher, independent of his notes. It will also beget a habit of right-preaching, both as to matter and manner, and produce that kind of direct address, instead of essay-like stiffness and formality, which is desirable for popular and useful preaching." For the lack of this, how many hearers have testified, "Under Mr. A.'s preaching I do not remember to have received any religious impressions whatever."

To be resigned to such a failure as this, is to be criminally indifferent to duty.

Within a few years three men of almost unequalled usefulness have finished a long service in the ministry with joy, and have gone home to heaven with many stars in their crowns, — Richard Knill, James Sherman, and John Angell James. Differing greatly in many particulars, in some points their resemblance was very striking. They were all called to the ministry out of circumstances extremely unpromising. Their education, as compared with what is now the usual training of our ministers, was almost nothing. They were alike in being filled with a single-hearted desire to save souls and to honor Christ; alike in the possession of fervent, generous affections; alike in their success in winning souls to Christ. Before Knill's death he knew of one hundred persons converted under his ministry, who, in one form or an-

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other, had themselves become ministers of Christ. Eighty-four persons, says Sherman's biographer, joined the church in Surrey Chapel, who attributed their conversion to one and the same sermon. A like result came of one sermon preached by Mr. Sherman during his ministry at Reading. Mr. James began when he was a little more than nineteen years old with fifty church members, who before his death had increased to a thousand.

In education and in strength of intellect far inferior to Luther, they resembled the great reformer in uncompromising devotion to the extension of Christ's kingdom. All of these knew how to set their men to work; to cherish and augment the gifts and graces of the flocks over which the Holy Ghost made them overseers. They brought the cup of salvation to the lips of the humblest. The Surrey Chapel Church, under Mr. Sherman, organized and maintained eleven Sabbath-schools, with four hundred and fifty teachers, and more than three thousand scholars. While at Reading he proposed the erection of seven chapels in as many adjacent towns and villages, from three to eight miles distant, most of them of stone, with towers and bells, in which worship, generally under lay conduct, was permanently established. And the men who achieved such blessed results were men who preached the word in season and out of season. And what were the characteristics of their sermons, think you? Did they abound in metaphysical hair-splittings? in wonderful exhibitions of

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originality? Nay, but they had their freshness from the heart, from close and tender sympathy and fellowship with Jesus.

What, then, was the secret of their success? Wherein did their strength lie? James says of himself, "The character of my mind being eminently and unalterably practical, I have had neither the taste nor the ability for metaphysical speculation, or theological profundities. I am neither philosopher nor critic; and can give no emendations of difficult or doubtful passages, and no new theories of particular texts or general doctrines. I cannot add to the stock of sacred literature, or enlarge the stores of any who are well read in divinity. I lack the power of invention, and have no originality. *One* thing I *do* possess and have retained, and that is a clear understanding of the objects of the ministry. 'They watch for souls, as they that must give account,' has been my motto; and a constant aim at conversion has been my aim. I have always considered that a minister does as much by his heart as he does by his head. A cold intellectuality, a mere scientific mode of preaching, will do little good. I have been enabled to keep hold of the heart of the people by my own heart being much shown to them in all my intercourse with them. They knew I loved them, and love begets love. No minister can be a good and efficient preacher of the Gospel who does not produce on the minds of his hearers the conviction, This man is intent on saving our souls; he

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would save us if he could. I am more than ever convinced that the kind of preaching which is wanted at the present day is a combination of the intellectual, doctrinal, experimental, and practical sermons, coming from the head through the heart, or from the heart through the head. It is the old matter with new accidents; the matter of the past age in the style of the present. From the heart to the heart is the great canon."

Said the theological students of him, "Over all our conversations the remarkable thing was, his heart poured the fulness of his love, and our hearts were won to his by the glow of its genial friendliness. He invariably knelt before God at the close of our interviews. After prayer from one of us, his own tender and affectionate intercessions were presented. We then learned how to pray; the heart was stirred to its depth; the fountains of sympathetic desire were unsealed." "I have often," says one, "been melted into tears by his earnest supplications in our behalf." Mr. James well knew and said, "Preaching does not exercise and strengthen the gentleness, the patience, the perseverance which are developed by the more private functions of the ministry; the visitations of the sick, and the troubled, and the poor."

Says his son, "A shrewd Wesleyan once remarked to me that my father owed much of his success in the pulpit to his diluting his meaning down to the precise degree at which it was most easily appre-

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hended by a common congregation." "He never forgot that to demonstrate is not always to convince; nor to convince always to persuade. A gulf, broad and deep, often lies between the judgment and the will, and he endeavored to bridge it over. Hence his sermons would never by any accident be called *intellectual*. That term has been applied of late years as an epithet of honor to describe a style of preaching which is deficient in all that distinguishes eloquence from instruction." "We have to do," exclaims Mr. James in his "Earnest Ministry," "not only with a dark intellect that needs to be instructed, but with a hard heart that needs to be impressed, and a torpid conscience that needs to be awakened; and have to make our hearers feel that in the great business of religion there is much to be done, as well as much to be known."

"There was one characteristic of his preaching by which he often made a very deep impression; I mean the freedom with which he employed arguments and appeals derived from his physical infirmities, his domestic sorrows, his affection for his people, and their affection for him. He was incessantly preaching to particular classes on their peculiar duties and dangers. Very few of his ethical sermons were preached on isolated texts chosen for the purpose. He expounded in course many of the books both of the Old Testament and the New. His expository sermons were very unpretentious, but were marked by sound judgment, and were very instructive."

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Above all he was an eminently holy man. "Science and literature," he said, "to be useful to a minister of Jesus Christ, must be held in solution by eminent religion." And as he spake, so he lived. "A saintly man is a means of grace to all who know him. The love and respect he inspires, the pleasure of possessing his approbation, and the fear of incurring his rebuke, are aids to holy living." Such a man could use plainness of speech. He did: "You know how earnestly and how anxiously I have reminded you that to be a church-member is not at all the same thing as being a Christian; how often and how emphatically I have told you that many will spend their eternity in the bottomless pit with Satan and his angels who have spent their time on earth in the nominal fellowship of the church of Christ."

Of Sherman, his biographer says: "No claim to intellectual greatness or originality is made for him. He freely and admiringly admitted the superiority of many of his brethren. His inner life was neither profound nor distinctive; it was simply intensely fervent." A weakly lad, of poor parentage, he was early apprenticed to an ivory turner. After a year or two, on account of ill-health, his indenture was given up to him, and having been converted, he cherished the hope of preaching the Gospel. Three short sessions at Cheshunt College, which he entered at nineteen, comprised the whole of his preparation for the ministry; and yet, from the very beginning, it was a ministry of great usefulness, an eminently suc-

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cessful ministry. How it became such is revealed by his own pen: "I found it easier to preach a hundred sermons than to conquer one evil passion. He who seeks to make his preaching and his practice correspond will have many sacrifices of natural inclination to make. And if he do not make them, he may with certainty calculate upon strong prejudices against him arising in many pious minds; prejudices springing from a jealousy for the Lord of Hosts, sometimes, perhaps, severe and puritanical, but on the whole commendable and beneficial. If, therefore, he will not fight out of the pulpit, he cannot reign in it. My best preparations for the pulpit were, reasonable study, a visit to the sick, and a quarter of an hour with God. On my first settlement (after three years' evangelizing) every sitting in the spacious chapel in Reading, said to hold twelve hundred persons, was soon let; and for years the aisles were all filled at almost every service. This surprised no one more than myself. The ministry was neither original, nor learned, nor intellectual, nor mythical, nor comical. Its doctrines were those usually styled moderate Calvinism. Its style was plain and pointed, and the savor of the Gospel was in every sermon; and the truth was delivered with earnestness and practical application. A course of visitation was necessary to acquaint me with the religious state and habits of the people, which I immediately commenced." A contemporary during his Reading ministry says of him, "You know his inim-

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itable pathos both in prayer and preaching. A careless Sabbath-breaking man stumbled into his chapel one Sunday morning when he was engaged in prayer. He took his stand in the aisle, and seeing the tears rolling down the minister's cheeks and falling upon the book as he was pleading for the conversion of sinners, he was arrested, and said to himself: This man is evidently in earnest; there must be something in the condition of sinners which I do not understand. He remained, and was instructed, and converted."

Of Knill, Mr. James says, "His usefulness in the conversion of souls to God was perhaps greater than that of any other man in this kingdom. Wherever he labored, whether in the villages of Devon, in India, in Russia, or in the various parts of England, he was instrumental in awakening the impenitent and careless to a deep concern for their eternal welfare. He entered every place with that object in view, and in very few instances left without having in some measure accomplished it. His usefulness lay not exclusively among the poor; many persons of education, intelligence, and station were brought through him under the influence of evangelical religion."

Says his biographer, "There was no class of persons whom he feared to encounter, or despaired of blessing. When one day about to enter a carriage at the Chester Railway Station, he observed some officers putting some chained prisoners into an apartment of an inferior carriage by themselves. He was

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immediately touched with compassion, and begged to be allowed to accompany them. The officers seemed surprised at his request, but made no objection. He spoke to them with such power that most of them were in tears, and before he left he knelt down at their request, and offered up fervent prayers for their reconciliation both to man and God. In India Mr. Knill gained much influence over the officers. His sincere, open, and direct manner suited their taste. 'What do you missionaries mean,' said one of them; 'do you think that poor black fellow will be damned?' 'I hope not,' was the answer; 'but if he is, I think his punishment will be very light compared with yours, if you neglect God.' 'I believe it,' said the officer, 'I have long thought so.' Another, whose conscience had been aroused, but who still clung to his sins, one morning called and sought to get into an argument, 'There are many things in the Bible, sir, impossible to be understood.' 'There are, sir,' was the reply, 'but the seventh commandment is very plain.' The controversy ended."

"Such a man's life," said Mr. James, "should be a study. He was no orator in the conventional meaning of that term, yet had he the power of rousing, fixing, and holding the attention of an audience far above what most elaborate and intellectual preachers possess. His eloquence was that of the heart, gushing out in streams of impassioned feeling which carried away his hearers on the tide of his own

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emotion; the eloquence of a man on fire with zeal for God, and melted into compassion for souls hovering on the verge of the bottomless pit; the eloquence of faith and love. He set out in life with the adoption of that mighty, impulsive, and glorious word, *usefulness*, and usefulness with him meant converting sinners. He yearned for the salvation of souls. It was with him not merely a principle or a privilege, but a passion. For this he longed and prayed in the closet, wrote in the study, labored in the pulpit, conversed in the parlor, admonished, counselled and warned, wherever he went." And what James said of Knill might be said of himself probably with equal truth.

With such facts, so authenticated, concerning the ministry of James, of Knill, and of Sherman, is it conceivable that any man called of God to be His minister can fail to search out the secret of such successes? Would any like record of success in amassing money be permitted to escape the scrutiny of the wiser children of this world, think you? No, indeed! Nothing could divert them; nothing arrest their inexorable determination to master and utilize the secret. Fling to men called of God the golden apples of scholastic eminence, astute or profound theories of what *ought* to secure the largest influence, and elevate them to the very climax of success, — would these lure their attention from the methods of the men who were actually bringing souls to Jesus day by day? Judge ye.

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The natural qualifications of a successful ministry are not possessed in equal degrees by all men, but the following need only to be named to be acknowledged to be within the reach of all earnest aspirants: —

1. Industry; involving a deep sense of the worth of time and a vigorous determination to make the most of it.

2. Kindliness; amounting to generosity, and a pleasure in doing anything for others, a delight in making others happy.

3. The abnegation of self, as an object of pursuit, either for indulgence or for aggrandizement.

4. That thorough appreciation of truth which makes one too sensible of his own ignorance to permit the least self-complacency.

5. Utter intolerance of faults in one's self; an inexorable determination in Christ and through Christ to conquer every fault.

6. Great candor and readiness to make allowance for the faults of others, yet never losing nor obscuring the sharp distinction between right and wrong.

7. Quick sensibility to the sufferings of others, and desire to alleviate them.

The spiritual qualifications for a successful ministry are most surely to be had for the asking. "Your Heavenly Father is more willing to give his Spirit to them that ask him than parents to give good gifts to their children."

This promise of the Father, for which Jesus bade

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the disciples tarry in Jerusalem, includes all gifts, since it promotes and vitalizes all gifts. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." This fruit of the Spirit will, in our time, ripen into a habit of daily and hourly dedication and surrender of ourselves to Christ, the reality of which will appear in the following particulars: —

1. In a willingness to be useful in the humblest ways; in ways that bring no honor to one's self, but on the contrary expose us to scorn and rudeness. This includes the desire and determination to find out what God wishes *me* to do, and to do *that;* and also the unwavering conviction that the Holy Ghost, dwelling in me as an infallible teacher and guide, all my experiences are ordered to the furtherance of the Gospel.

2. In an inflexible determination to lose no opportunity of recommending Christ in casual interviews, on brief acquaintance, apropos to anything, cultivating an aptitude for religious conversation, and for the felicitous quotation of some message from the Bible, sustained by pertinent illustration from our own experience.

3. In an habitual care to please our neighbor for his good, to edification.

4. In a willingness to risk failure, in efforts that permit the hope of success, when success will specially honor God and benefit man.

5. In a veritable and controlling reliance upon the

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Holy Ghost for general guidance; and also for direction even in minute details, when such guidance and direction will secure valuable ends; and above all contribute to sustain an unwavering reliance upon Him for that divine inspiration without which the best words will be empty; but with which the weakest words will have power to convince, convert, and sanctify.

6. In a special, intelligent, and invincible determination to honor God by always giving prominence to His Word, relying on that to convert and instruct men.

7. In a confident reliance upon God to supply all our need, so strong as to prevent the utterance of a single complaint of neglect, of actual or of anticipated want, to any one but God; thus enabling us to say in perfect truth, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, to be therewith content."

8. In a fellowship with Jesus, so real, tender, constant, and controlling, as to be by far the most real thing in life.

He who has these fruits of the Spirit cannot but have a successful ministry. "This is the record God hath given unto us, eternal life; and this life is in his Son," — whoever liveth to make intercession for us before the throne; and by his Spirit dwelling in us, grants us daily, hourly, and ceaseless communion and fellowship with himself, and in so doing gives us power to impart life to others.

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One of the last acts of that noble servant of Christ, JOHN ANGELL JAMES, of Birmingham, England, was his writing, at the request of the biographer, a brief summing up of the life of RICHARD KNILL; that he might strongly commend to candidates for the ministry, some of the characteristics of Knill's superior usefulness.

He says Mr. Knill was no ordinary man. His usefulness in the way of conversion of souls to God was perhaps greater, all things taken into the account, than that of any other man of his day in this kingdom. Wherever he labored, whether in the villages of Devonshire, in India, in Russia, or in the various parts of England, he was instrumental in awakening the impenitent and careless to a deep concern for their eternal welfare. He entered every place with that object in view, and in very few instances left without having in some measure accomplished it. His usefulness lay not exclusively among the poor; many persons of education, intelligence, and station were brought, through him, under the influence of evangelical religion. How seldom has the individual been found, since Whitefield and Wesley's time, of whom it could be said that there was reason to believe he had been the instrument of converting a hundred persons who, in one way or another, became preachers of the Gospel. This added to the multitude of other persons who by his instrumentality were brought to the Saviour of the world, is an amount of usefulness which rarely falls to the

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lot of any minister of Christ. It proves that he, above most, was "wise to win souls," and that "God was with him."

We now take up the inquiry after the means by which he attained to so great a measure of usefulness. It is evident that was in a great degree to be attributed to his intense desire after it. He set out in life with the adoption of that mighty, impulsive, and glorious word *usefulness;* and usefulness with him meant converting sinners. He yearned for the salvation of souls. It was, with him, not merely a principle or a privilege, but a passion. For this he longed and prayed in the closet, wrote in the study, labored in the pulpit, conversed in the parlor, and admonished, counselled, and warned wherever he went. It was his conviction that his talent and temperament were more especially adapted for the work of conversion, and thence his sermons contained invariably a large portion of the truths which conduct to it. They were, to a considerable extent, made up of first principles, and were not so much calculated for leading on a congregation to perfection.

It is, I think, an error into which many of our modern ministers, whose education has been carried to a high pitch, have fallen, — that everything is to be done by the head rather than by the heart. We know very well that the true method is to reach the heart through the head, and that men must be made to feel by being shown why they should feel, and what is to make them feel. But in very many cases,

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especially in the least educated, the head is to be reached by appeals to the heart. We often hear the remark, "Yes, it was a clever sermon, but it wanted heart. It sparkled like the stars, or shone like the moon on a wintry night, but it warmed no one." Mr. Knill often did with a few touches of genuine emotion what others could not do with great elaboration. The usefulness of Mr. Knill, however, was not exclusively the result of his preaching. The passion for the conversion of souls, which he manifested in the pulpit, and which led him to seek it with such earnestness there, he brought with him out of the sanctuary and carried into more private spheres, as the great object of life and principle of action. Like the enthusiastic botanist, geologist, or entomologist, he was ever in pursuit of his object, and looking out for fresh means of gaining it. It was his felicity to have seldom need to say, "I have lost an opportunity." How few, how very few of us, have attained to this watchfulness for occasions of usefulness. Our friend, no doubt, had a peculiar tact for this way of doing good, a talent which exists in various degrees in different persons, but which ought to be, and may be, cultivated by all.

There was another way in which Mr. Knill extended his usefulness, and that was by writing and publishing short, striking, religious tracts, generally founded on some facts. They obtained, he tells us, a circulation of some millions, and were greatly honored for the conversion of souls.

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And why are any of God's servants feeble in action, but because they are weak in devotion? What is wanted among us is deeper-toned piety, a more devotional spirit.

O for a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit, a revived ministry and a revived Church; a race of preachers and of people whose whole character and conduct shall bear in letters which every one that sees must read, the inscription on the mitre of the High Priest, "Holiness to the Lord."

It will, perhaps, be asked, if I would hold up Mr. Knill as a standard and model for all. In some things I would. In his singular devotedness and consecration to his work; in his deep conviction and clear perception that the salvation of souls is the great end of the ministerial office; in his intense desire and constant endeavor in all ways to reach this end; in the prevailing evangelism and earnestness of his sermons; in his eminent piety and devout spirit; in his loving disposition and kindly bearing; in his simplicity, fidelity, and courage; in all these things, I would commend his example as what we should endeavor to copy. To my younger brethren, I say, "happy will it be for you, and happy for your flocks if the reading of his memoir shall help you to find and to wear the mantle of Richard Knill."

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XI.

HINDERANCES TO PROGRESS.

MANY a sincere believer is disquieted because he cannot find sensible progress. He does not know what hinders; wishes he did know; thinks he would grudge no endeavor to secure such progress, if he could but ascertain what endeavor is needed. He thinks there may be something unfriendly in his circumstances. He is very sure that did he enjoy the freedom of access to Christ accorded to the first disciples, he certainly would rise above his present low and unsatisfactory condition.

This very common persuasion is a misleading persuasion. It is, in fact, one of the most serious hinderances to spiritual progress. Of course while he indulges this idea, he will, with this, indulge another; namely, that until God grants some change in his circumstances, his endeavor for any considerable improvement in spiritual life will come to nothing. This idea is the product, not of the new life, but of the old; the life of nature. It is both false and mischievous. It must be seen to be false, that it

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may be shorn of its mischievous influence. It is written of the new life, "We walk by faith, not by sight." And the language of faith is, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God;" and this is by no fortuitous concurrence of events, but under the unchangeable law of our Redeemer's kingdom. He arranges all our circumstances so as to secure to us the highest advantages for spiritual progress. It is no bar to this progress that we cannot now know Christ after the flesh; that we cannot come into His physical presence; but, on the contrary, it is the removal of such a bar, that we now know Him in no such way. The disciple who longs to know Jesus more intimately, must first of all tell Jesus his longing, and that not once or twice, but every day, and every hour of every day which he can command. He may well take up the question of Judas, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" And he must give heed to the answer, "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him."

You will ask, perhaps, but what especial words of Jesus may we suppose he intends? And I answer, especially such words as these: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do. I will not leave you comfortless. The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, he shall teach you all things; for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you. According

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to your faith be it unto you." Unhappily a large part of the avowed disciples of Jesus never deeply penetrate the meaning of these words of His. The Comforter is not to them a real, present, personal friend. They respect "the influence of the Spirit;" they do not intimately know the *Friend*. Not entertaining what Jesus says of this Friend, they make His saying of no effect; they are left comfortless, because they do not intelligently and cordially receive and entertain the Comforter. Thus they bar the spiritual progress they desire, and impute to unfriendly circumstances what should be referred to their neglect of the words of Jesus. Jesus is as real and really accessible to-day as eighteen hundred years ago, and it is the especial office of the Divine Comforter to realize Him to us. "For," said Jesus, "He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. He shall take of mine and show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine and show it unto you."

Now be it known, dear friends, to each and all of you who are desiring a closer walk with God, an actualizing of His personal presence and friendship able to satisfy all your needs, and not unlike nor inferior to that of the beloved John's, and of which he says, "Truly our friendship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ,"—all this is freely offered you, on the one condition, that you believe mischievous His words. Read John xiv. 22, 23; and

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when you have read, believe. "All things are possible to him that believeth." Believe these words of Jesus. Believe also verses 18 and 26 of this same chapter. Really believe and act upon the faith of what He says, shaping and governing your whole life upon this belief, and your conscious progress will be inevitable.

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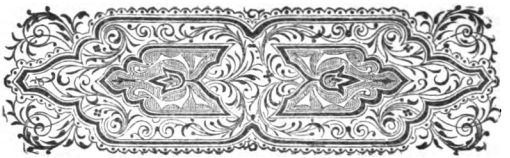

XII.

FAITH.

WE shall never have done studying faith; we shall never have done with the need to enlarge our apprehension of it. I am afraid it will be a long while before we shall have brushed away the cobwebs which are not faith, but a kind of solemn nonsense with which we more or less becloud it.

What faith is, we ought to know, for our Divine Teacher has stated it very simply, very intelligibly, even for the simplest and youngest. It is just laying hold of the unseen; just preferring what God says to what man says; preferring God's treasures to man's treasures; and this not merely occasionally, spasmodically, but habitually.

The generations of men one after another came on to this stage of life to find an infallible directory provided for them, a sure guide to happiness; provided also with a monitor within, who confirms the testimony of God, that there is nothing beneath the sun to satisfy the cravings of an immortal spirit. In God's directory is instruction in every form; exhorta-

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tion, precept, command, narrative. The decalogue declares what man must do, and must not do. The history of the generations before and after the flood exhibits the results of obedience and disobedience. Solomon has left his experience of what unbounded resources could do for a man who set his heart upon accumulating all the delights of the sons of men. The result was vanity and vexation of spirit. And yet each one of us, to a greater or less extent, declines to be taught of God or man. Somehow, we think the visible and the temporal is going to do for us what it has never done for others; what we are ready enough to warn others it will never do for them. What very bond-slaves we are to unbelief! But our God is able, and willing too, to rend these fetters. He has given us the power to choose, the power to will, the power to be in thorough earnest. Dear friends, shall we not begin to exercise this power? Shall we not begin to set before us and to hold before us such assurances as this, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled;" and this, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;" and this, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and this, "Verily I say unto you, there is no man who has forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, but shall receive a hundred-fold more in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting"? Faith says,

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morning by morning, hour by hour, "I am on probation this day, this hour, to see if I will believe God or man; God's testimony, or only the testimony of the senses. I am exalted to great honor. I am made a spectacle to angels. The Son of Man is looking to see if He shall find faith on the earth. I am resolved he shall find it in my soul."

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XIII.

HOW TO BEGIN LIFE.

THE works at Rogersville are large, the owners are substantial men, in character, as well as in money, and a better opening for a young man, it would be hard to find."

"But have they good society?"

Ay, that's the question our enterprising young men and their pretty and accomplished wives are ever ready with. And I will answer you after the French fashion, "That depends." It depends upon what you intend to make of society, and what of yourself. It depends upon your view of life, and what you expect and intend to make of life. Tell me the one, and I will tell you the other. If you intend to make a puppet-show of life; if all the men and women are to pull the wires, and entertain you with amusing sights, I am afraid I can't promise *that* for Rogersville. In the first place they are a busy people, and have their own subsistence to earn. In the second place they are a shrewd people, and apt to penetrate a selfish scheme. In the third place

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they are a thrifty people, who would decline an overture when there was nothing to be gained by it.

If your plan of life is to monopolize the honors, and give the drudgery to others; to receive, in short, but not to give; I fear you will be disappointed in our society.

On the other hand, if you agree with the Son of God, that it is more blessed to give than to receive, I can confidently promise you good society — very good society; society that will freely receive all you have to give, that is, if you manage your giving wisely. You shall find just such society as our blessed Lord found in Nazareth and Capernaum, in the borders of Zebulon and Nephthalim, by the seaside beyond Jordan, and in Galilee of the Gentiles. You will find them a mixed people, combined of various elements. I can't predict with certainty, how many men in a dozen will make eminent men, extraordinary men, memorable men, or even stirring men. Our Lord found a Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, James, Peter, and some others — nay, he found the material, out of which, with great painstaking, such men were to be made. He found also the Marys, Martha, and others, who but for his painstaking would have lived in ignorance of all that it most concerned them to know, and might have been companions of devils.

I think you can have no doubt that though "a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief," our Lord was the *happiest*, as well as the best, who ever walked the

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earth; for he not only declared it "more blessed to give than to receive;" over which you might pause, as doubting whether it might not be a truth so abstract as to be more fit for God's use than man's; but Jesus also declares, "I delight to do thy will, O God." The will of God is that "to do good and communicate, you forget not;" that "as you have freely received you shall freely give."

Come to Rogersville with these maxims for your mottoes, and I dare promise you such society as the angels keep and value. You shall have the society of those who will have just reason to regard you as, next to God, best worthy of their honor and their love.

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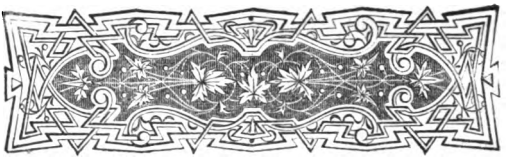

XIV.

DEFERENCE OR LOVE?

WHICH will you have, respectful deference, or trustful love? Consciously or unconsciously, you are daily making your election; and audibly, or inaudibly, you are being answered, almost in the words of the itinerant showman, "You pay your money, you take your choice." For though neither deference nor love should be bought with money, each may be and is had at its own proper cost; and many a man is like a spoiled child in his determination to have at any rate something not at all good for him.

Let us examine the price of these several commodities. Be not displeased that they are so characterized. Be assured that they are not therefore depreciated or disesteemed. There is Divine authority for speaking thus of what stands very high in God's esteem, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed." The man who sold all that he had, and bought the pearl of

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great price, was never blamed, but praised for the investment.

Respectful deference, fairly and wisely bought, is a good thing and a valuable acquisition. It is sometimes gotten by false pretences. It is said that the world will commonly take a man at his own estimate of himself. It is not less true that the world is in this way often overreached; and it resents the cheat, when it discovers that it is a cheat; though it may, from policy, withhold its resentment from the object of it; as men will sometimes go through life yielding a show of deference to one who takes it as his right, because, they say, they will not quarrel with a man who has not the wit to know either how much he overestimates himself, or how little any one is deceived by his groundless pretensions. "One might as well quarrel with an imbecile." We can easily see, —

1. That deference bought with *money*, is a forced purchase, extorted from poor, grovelling human nature, which, however vexed with itself, and resolved not to be cajoled or driven into the concession of what it knows to be undeserved, is continually betrayed by its one weakness. "I will not yield respect to mere money-bags," says many a man. Nor would he, had he that nobility of soul which makes a man independent of his fellow-men. But the very atmosphere betrays him. The drift of the wind and tide of common life, lawless and worthless as it may be, by the mere force of continuousness, will in the

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end wear away the hardest resolves of just judgment. All men are subject to the common wants of humanity; money is the currency given in exchange for what they want; and every man, however much or little entitled to respect, has in some sort a lien upon this common currency, and, to that extent, must be propitiated. He who has what will supply our common wants becomes an object of envy. He impersonates the power to relieve those wants, and so is looked up to. Though neither God nor godlike he gathers no small measure of the tribute due to the Deity he seems to represent.

2. We can readily see that even the deference bought with *talent* is often a forced purchase. "Such a man," says one, "I do not respect. I have no confidence in his principles nor in his life; but he has great influence in the community; he may have the power to injure me, and will be very likely to use that power if he thinks me lacking in the deference he claims." A vast deal of seeming deference is, in truth, but a sop thrown to the Cerberus, who may bite us if he be not appeased.

3. The deference accorded to *social position*, is often little better than a bribe. If I propitiate this man with a seeming deference which costs me little, and which he plainly craves, he may some day lend the lifting hand which my ambitious aspirations seek.

4. *Reserve* often extorts a measure of deference from those who have no tribute of respect to render to transparent openness. It is not to be questioned

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that circumstances do often necessitate a wise reserve. But in this necessity there is found no evidence that reserve is in itself a good and beneficent thing. On the contrary, reserve may often be resolved into apathy, indolence, and selfishness, extending sometimes to the utter denial of the great command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Many a man is reserved because frankness would cost him the good-will of the wrong-doer, or the labor of justifying a right position. He would sacrifice the most momentous principle to his own indolent ease.

5. Deference is often bought by *ill-temper*. The passionate and revengeful man is dreaded. He extorts many a concession which would never be made to one who is known always to respect the rights of others. Men make a show of deference to the man with whom they think they cannot afford to quarrel.

6. *Conceit*, complacency in one's self, nourished, as it often is, by fostering circumstances, and begetting, as it ever does, a sensitiveness threatening continual collisions, buys a show of deference, which the self-complacent man easily mistakes for something true, and good, and due to himself.

To the several classes here indicated as obtaining —it may be unconsciously — deference by false pretences, dignity is sometimes ascribed. But dignity is *real worth*, and real worth must needs include a just knowledge of ourselves and of others, and of what is due to each. It is not impossible to find the

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man whose self-respect amounts to an estimate of himself so enormous as to exclude the supposition that another might differ from him in judgment or opinion, and yet be both courteous and right. The self-respect of such an one rests on his incapability of recognizing goodness and truth in another.

"But," you are saying, "I don't much like your way of putting this. It is as though there were no *real* deference; and, almost as though there were nothing in life to deserve such deference."

Not so, my friend. My first intent was to secure attention to the fact that the common average of deference is entirely overestimated, and is a dear purchase at any price. There *is* a *genuine* deference. It is not an object for direct pursuit. It comes to the worthy incidentally; follows him inevitably, as his shadow follows him when he faces the Sun of Righteousness, and devotes his day to his Father's business. My second intent was to persuade to the choice of *love*. To this choice we are bound by many and the weightiest considerations.

1. We *must* win the trustful love of our fellows, or fail in obedience to our Divine commission to preach the Gospel to every creature; to disciple all nations. This Gospel is a Gospel of love throughout. Love brought it. Love must receive it. Love must diffuse it; and that lovingly. It was and is a Gospel of sacrifice, even to the extent of life for a life. It is idle to suppose that we can, without sacrifice, give to others what Jesus gave us only at the cost of His

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own blood. Therefore, if we would win the trustful love of our fellows, we must willingly, ay, cheerfully, sacrifice our pride, love of ease, self-indulgence in any form, pleasure, profit, everything, in short, that comes between us and them. They must have convincing evidence of the genuineness of our love for them, before they can give trustful love to us. It is in the continuous exercise of self-sacrificing love that we abide in Christ. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine," says Jesus, "no more can ye except ye abide in me. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."

2. Nothing so tests the actuality and the purity of our love to Jesus as the persistent pursuit of trustful love. Knowing, as we do, that one's power over others for their good is, and must be, measured by the trustful love we enable them to give us, is it not plain that, man-ward, our highest obligation is to deserve and to win that love?

3. We must possess the trustful love of Jesus. "When they saw His miracles," eighteen hundred years ago, "many believed in His name. But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men." Is it not plain that those only can be filled with all the fulness of God whom Jesus can completely trust? "For this is eternal life: to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Therefore, dear Lord, "O show thyself to me, or take me up to thee."

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XV.

WHAT CAN I DO?

THAT depends upon how much in earnest you are. It depends also upon the source of your earnestness. Do you love Jesus? Is your love so strong that you must fill your heart and hands with work for Him? If you could be sure that Jesus had provided work for you, however humble, ay, even contemptible in the eyes of men, would you accept it thankfully and pursue it faithfully? If so, then there is work for you, and very precious work.

It is Tract Work. I do not think every one is called to tract work. God giveth to every man severally as He will. Peter Drummond was a florist and nurseryman, near Stirling, Scotland. People came to his place on Sunday. He would not serve them on the Lord's day. He prepared a tract on the observance of the Sabbath, to admonish the Sabbath-breakers. Seeing the adaptation of this to correct one evil, he drawn on to deal with others; and so one Chris- leavor made way for another, until his cata- races seven hundred and sixteen tracts.

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Mr. Drummond has no doubt taken in the Divine assurance, Is. lv. 11, "My word shall not return unto me void." He believes that the tract, which is but a timely and wise commendation of some word of God, will surely "accomplish that which God pleases, and prosper in the thing whereto God sends it."

Now you may or may not be able to write a good tract; but you can do much in the way of distributing it. And you should do *what you can.* If you are in earnest to "*Seek first the Kingdom of God,*" you will be glad to learn that tract distribution is closely related to the furtherance and establishment of this kingdom. When our Lord said to the whole body of the first disciples, as he did, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," do you suppose he thought only of pulpit preaching? By no means! It could never be given to *every creature* in that way. His truth was to be scattered *in every possible way.* Tract distribution is one of the ways possible and available to many disciples. Perhaps you have made *occasional* use of tracts; rarely, perhaps, and with diffidence. Now to accomplish any considerable good your use of tracts must be frequent, constant, courageous and prayerful.

You must attain a deep and unalterable conviction that God's truth, contained in every good tract, is a mighty power; when steeped in prayer an irresistible power to save and to sanctify souls. When you have obtained this conviction, it remains only to settle the question to which division of this labor am I called?

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If you cannot yourself write a tract expressing persuasively what it most concerns men to learn, find some such tract, already written, as most forcibly expresses the lesson you long to teach, and devote yourself to the distribution of that tract. A friend of mine who loves this work has adopted S. M. Houghton's tract, "A Saviour for You." He has scattered hundreds of thousands of them. Some years ago he told me: "Within three years twenty-five persons have said to me, 'I was led to Christ by "A Saviour for You," which you gave me.'" Think of that! Twenty-five persons! Have you no desire to win as many or more to Jesus?

In every church of Christ all over our land there are doubtless young or older disciples wishing, "O, that I could be useful in some way!"

Well, dear friends, here is one way: Let two or three or more of you agree together upon some systematic endeavor. Make a list of every member of your church and congregation. Present to each of them your plan to gather *monthly* any sum, large or small, which each may be willing to give monthly for the distribution of tracts. Lend or give, as you may be able, to each of your donors, a half a dozen or more tracts to choose from. Ask them, "Which tract will you have your donation circulate?" Begin that circulation in your own society and town. Get from the Secretary of the Home Missionary Society a list of missionaries and of destitute parishes to whom your monthly overplus will be acceptable. Write and

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send through the post-office little parcels; opening communication with these servants of the Lord in various places. Send your donations to the Secretary of this Society, and he will forward to you many choice tracts which God has blessed to the saving and sanctifying of souls.

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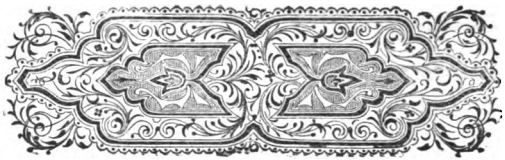

XVI.

QUESTIONINGS.

IT seems strange that when I am trying the very best I know to do what God would have me, I am every now and then entirely prevented; sometimes by the very friends of God; and my very best endeavors, my most prayerful endeavors, are utterly frustrated! Now, how can you reconcile that with the declaration, 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God'? It seems to me we don't know any such thing."

"Your experience, my dear brother, has been a frequent experience with me. Once it perplexed me. It does not now. It would not perplex you, but for an assumption which you should not make; namely, that nothing is gained when your own will is not gained."

"My will! It is not my will that I am seeking, but the advancement of the cause of our blessed Lord. For example, here, a while since, I was doing my utmost to secure for our congregation the best

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minister in the land. I was not working for myself, but for Christ and the church. A few persons, whose judgment I cannot think better than my own, put their foot down that they would not have the best man. Now, how can that be anything else but an irreparable loss? And what's the use of asking me to believe that the wrong man is just as good, and even better, than the right man?"

"I have n't said or implied that the wrong man is just as good as the right man. But this I will venture to assert: that our Lord desires one other thing more than He desires the always succeeding of right-minded and wise endeavors; namely, the highest and best development of His dear children who make them. And this best development is many times secured by the frustration of good and wise endeavors. It requires no great grace to resign without a murmur a scheme that can be shown to be unwise and undesirable. But to yield the choicest and the best of our devising with loving and patient resignation, when the self-will of a perverse or ignorant man interposes to resist us, and to force upon us an alternative which better knowledge can view only with complete disapproval, — this is to achieve what greatly endears us to Him who has set His heart upon us to present us in Zion perfect before God. 'Behold we count them happy which endure;' and so our Lord accounts. You say, my dear brother, it was not your will you were seeking; but who of us, however he may start with the sole desire to honor

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His Lord, can be sure that he is never inveigled into a self-willed pursuit of that which he meant for his Master's honor? We are bound to serve not only for noble ends, but also with noble means. And assuredly few occasions demand of us a nobler or a costlier service than that which is demanded when, fearing to surrender that which we are persuaded would most honor our blessed Lord, His own instructions inspire a yet more controlling fear, lest in the midst of our ardent zeal for Him we should let slip the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit and that lowliness of mind ever ready to esteem others better than ourselves, which is in His sight of great price."

"Do you believe that sincere prayer always obtains just what is asked?"

"Let me ask you in turn, Do you believe that every sincere Christian is infallible? May not the child of our Heavenly Father, in common with all children, sometimes ask what His Father's wisdom and love would forbid to be granted?"

"Why, of course, we are none of us infallible; but then we have the promise of the Holy Ghost to guide us into all truth, and I suppose that must include guidance in prayer."

"Undoubtedly; and there can be no room for doubt that when we pray in the Holy Ghost, as Jude expresses it; when we are filled with the Holy Ghost, as Paul was; separated to our work by the Holy Ghost, as Paul and Barnabas were; our prayers will obtain God's best gifts for men; though from the

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experience of Paul and Barnabas at Antioch it is a reasonable inference that the largest gift of the Holy Ghost does not supersede that exercise of personal judgment upon which our accountability to God must needs rest."

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XVII.

THE HIGHEST CHRISTIAN LIFE.

MEN are divided about "The Higher Christian Life;" they ought not to be divided as to the highest Christian life; concerning this they surely should be of one heart and one mind. It seems to me that our generation is waiting for some single-hearted, holy man to give Christ's mind upon this matter, in simple phrase that all can understand. Much is said about holiness; much about entire consecration; much about entire sanctification. Very much is said loosely; so loosely that many who would, cannot profit by it. Until we come to a clear understanding and accord upon the significance of the term employed, there cannot but be endless disagreement, perhaps contentions, and loss, sometimes, of good-will. I think we may easily agree upon some inseparable preliminaries. Thus, *e. g.*, in our Lord's own words: First, "No man can serve two masters;" and therefore, Second, "His servants ye are whom ye obey." Third, there can be neither consecration, sanctification, nor holiness, for one who

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does not seek *first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Fourth, the kingdom of God is in human hearts, and it is in that heart only in which mind and heart delight in knowing, honoring and serving God to the extent of its knowledge and capacity. Fifth, the kingdom of God is an increasing kingdom; for, of the increase of His government there shall be no end. And this is eternal life, to know God and Jesus Christ. Sixth, Where the kingdom exists, it must suitably reveal itself, — that is to say, the revelation will be in suitable deference, reverence, and fealty to God.

Now let us consider such instances of real single-hearted service as we know of. St. Paul, we shall agree, was single-hearted in his service; "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom I am crucified unto the world, and the world unto me." "I am determined to know nothing but Christ, and Him crucified." Daniel was single-hearted. So was Samuel, Isaiah, and Enoch. We have all of us surely found, here and there, one in our own day. Now the persons who are thus single-hearted are made so by their clear vision of, and their close communion with Jesus. They are moved, by their knowledge of Jesus, to love and to serve Him; and where knowledge exists, that knowledge, like light, is diffusive; a city set on a hill cannot be hid; a candle set upon a candlestick gives light to all in the house. So he who has learned its loveliness, will speak of it, and speak of

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it appreciatively. He who has learned Christ's compassion, His meekness, purity, peace-making; His majesty, truth, wisdom, power, holiness, — will speak of each as the Spirit gives him utterance. Doubtless there are sincere Christians, honest, loyal, faithful Christians, whose knowledge of the Lord is extremely narrow and limited. They may love warmly all they know of Christ, and all they have found in Him, and are not to be blamed if they speak only what they have learned; but it surely is the duty of all who have learned more of Jesus to show that more to those who have less. It is scarcely confessing *Christ* to confess only one's love to him. It is necessary to confess His loveliness, and he only can confess Christ's loveliness who knows that loveliness. Let each disciple confess what he knows of it — all he knows of it; always with the understanding that he is eagerly pursuing, and will surely know more of it next week, next month, than he knows to-day; for Jesus himself says, "Then shall ye know if ye *follow on to know the Lord.*" The pastor who permits any one of his flock to go round and round, like a horse in a mill, with the same stereotype confession and profession, should consider that he is permitting that member to rest in what will no more keep good, without expansion and enlargement, than the manna, which was to serve but for one day, could be made to suffice for seven. "Give us day by day our daily bread."

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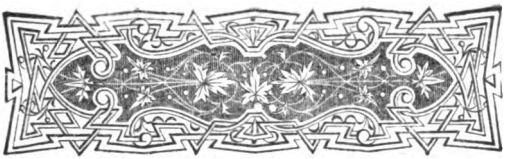

XVIII.

POWER OF THE LIFE IN CHRIST.

THE anxious solicitude of many an earnest child of God is met, ay, *fully* met, by our Lord's answer to one of the sisters of Bethany: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about *many* things; *but one thing is needful.*" And that one thing is instantaneous, loving oneness with Christ; a love, a trust, and a rest in Christ, that lifts the believer out of all solicitudes into the very bosom of his Lord. Insensibility to the honor and cause of Christ among professed disciples is, alas! mournfully extensive and deplorable. But it seems to escape the recognition of many earnest Christians that there is another type of unfaithfulness far more deplorable, because found in those from whom our Lord has reason to expect better things; in those, namely, who never cease to witness that Christ is all.

Anxious believers lay hold of their favorite and only type of the Redeemer's progress; it may be the unconcealed and agonizing convictions of unrenewed

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men, or the outspoken ecstasies of believers, and bemoan themselves and the Church that the reproduction of that type is seldom seen. They hold it up in perpetual token that the Holy Spirit has forsaken the Church, or their own branch of it. All the growing graces of believers and manifold manifestations of Christ's love go for nothing, in arresting their judgment, so long as they fail to see what they regard as the indispensable presage of His renewed and increased care for His flock. But, beloved, anxious brother, have you fairly estimated the power of growth in grace and in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ in any one Christian heart? Methinks I hear you say, "Oh, of course, growing in love is all right, and an excellent thing in itself; but the cause of Christ will never advance until the Church is awakened from its insensibility to the worth of dying souls around us!" But what is to arouse the Church of Christ? Is it stunning the ears of the sleepers with harrowing representations of the depth of the abyss, its much fire, and the worm that dieth not? You and I have seen many a brief awakening and relapse; a speedy return to insensibility and neglect, constraining us to affirm that the great majority of professed disciples of Christ do not believe in the certainty and fearfulness of future punishment. And no wonder that we so affirm. And therefore would I show a more excellent way.

There is a more excellent way. My assurance of it grows broader and firmer day by day. It is the

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way of closer communion and fellowship with Christ on the part of a few who really have become one with Him in everlasting love. Steady, continuous, faithful, persistent workers in Christ's service do not and never will find their impulse in harrowing pictures of the woes and tortures of the damned. It is not in human nature, not even in renewed humanity, to find its spring of action there. The only spring that can endure in our day is the love of Christ. Thank God, that spring is not only sufficient, it is incomparably more effective than any and all other. What has raised the world from the fearful condition of two thousand years ago? Just the love of God in Christ. And what is to carry on man's elevation from his present condition to that of perfect conformity to the will of God? Just the love of God in Christ working in us mightily both to will, and to do, and to be all that He desires; transforming us day by day and hour by hour into the image of God's dear Son.

Love is the spring that never loses its force; love is the fire that never dies; the light that never becomes dim; the tongue that is never silent; the argument that never loses its persuasive power. Jesus says, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same *bringeth forth* much fruit." Not that he shall some day; he does it now. No need to goad with harrowing appeals the soul that *abides* in Him. It has the fulness and vigor of loving life in Him. The power of love is infinitely greater

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than the power of fear. The love of Jesus makes it easy for the disciple who is one with Him; for the disciple who has gained the power of long continued habit of oneness with Him, to do and endure anything his Lord would have him. For one whose religious life must be sustained by laborious picturings of the lost, to summon the indissolubly one in Christ to more active service, is as though the groaning water-wheel, or some of its whirring spindles should call upon gravitation itself to awake from its indolent slumbers.

There is a love that comes of abiding in Christ and Christ in us, that we do well to liken to the law of gravitation. Both come from Christ. In the latter is His infinite power; in the former His infinite love. To the *full* believer Christ gives *Himself;* and so, when we thus believe, all things are ours. His joy remains in us, and our joy is full. This is Christ's own utterance to believers, who are to be his witnesses in a world alienated from God and condemned already. Are you prepared, my dear brother, to amend the last utterances of Him who knows what is in man, and what man needs to reclaim him?

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XIX.

HOLINESS.

IT is singular, very, how all at once, as it were, and from every quarter, there is so much talk about holiness, sanctification and the higher Christian life."

Yes; it is singular and remarkable, especially by those of us who are no longer young, who have been looking sorrowfully upon the successive developments of worldliness among the people of God, and to whom it is natural to revert to the days of more quiet, of greater simplicity of living, as being more hopeful than the present.

"But there is such a deplorable lack of humility in all this talk; such censoriousness and condemnation of better men who don't believe in thrusting their most serious thoughts upon others! It is really mournful to think how little such people know themselves."

Yes; it is mournful to think how little any of us know ourselves, and still more mournful to think how little we know our Divine Lord. And when we

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remember that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," how encouraging it is to find such a general awakening to the worth and beauty of holiness!

"I can't see it so at all. I don't find the evidence of any proper appreciation of holiness. There is a great deal of *talk* to be sure; you can't take up a paper but you 'll find an article, and it may be several, about 'The Higher Life.' I'm sick of it. For my part, I admire the passive graces. 'Still waters run deep.' I'm apt to think there's more holiness and a higher life where there's less talk."

I will not venture to controvert your statement. We know that we are all babes in Christ. The best of us are very immature. Unconsciously to ourselves we grow up in narrow views of truth and of Christian obligation. Even when we obtain light enough to make us aware of the danger of narrowness, it is only by desperate struggles against all narrowing influences that we obtain a limited success in overcoming them. But I cannot withhold a word of cheer from any man who is waking to the perception of a life higher than suffices the great majority of the church. It seems to me that I should be irresistibly impelled to whisper, "Awake, dear brother, awake to righteousness; arise, and Christ shall give thee light. Jesus is looking with tender solicitude to find faith on the earth; to find grateful acknowledgment for His mercies. You will cheer His heart by your growing love to Him; by your earnest prayer to be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom

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and spiritual understanding. I am sure He will enable you to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; he will make you faithful in every good work; and also to increase in the knowledge of God."

"But how can you possibly be hopeful of people who talk so freely, and, you must own, very often inaccurately, about the most sacred themes? And then, how they obtrude their experiences! How contrary to the whole spirit of the Bible!"

Are you sure you are quite right in this, my brother? Is it not written, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord;" and "if there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not;" "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven"?

"I don't complain of any man's confessing Christ, or exalting Christ, but the trouble is, that it is more themselves than Christ, they confess and exalt."

Does not our Heavenly Father characterize Christ as His "*unspeakable gift?*" Is it strange, then, that God's witnesses are able to confess Christ chiefly, not to say *only*, as they discover and disclose what they believe Him to have done for themselves? And is there not a Scriptural warrant for this confession? How runs the experience of every friend of God recorded in the Bible? "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I

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will trust." "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me; but verily God hath heard me; He hath attended to the voice of my prayer." "I love the Lord because He hath heard my voice and my supplications. Yea, our God is merciful. I was brought low and He helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Is not this the strain of the New Testament saints as well? What say John, and Peter, and James, and Paul? "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." "Ye adulterers and adultresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." "I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." "We are conquerors and more than conquerors through Him who hath loved us." "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not then have we confidence toward God." "I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "We who have believed do enter into rest." "Thanks be to God, who

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hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Of course I have no objection to make to such confessions as these. But do not these claimants of the 'Higher Christian Life,' to state it in the very kindest manner, make the most deplorable mistakes, even to the extent of supposing themselves delivered from sin?"

And yet, my dear friend, which is even more remarkable, *you* are impatient with them, *because they are not sinless.* But let us look a little more closely at this matter. These pleaders for "the Higher Christian Life," these men and women who think they have come to know a good thing, and are so solicitous to share it with their fellow-Christians, mention in particular that they have found great joy and great peace in believing; and out of that joy and peace, great strength and freedom to recommend Christ and His service. What is there new, strange, or unreasonable in that? I found out that more than forty years ago.

"Well, yes, that of course; but they don't stop there. Don't they pretend to be delivered more or less perfectly from sin?"

I dare say they do. I hope so. I should be terribly alarmed, and with reason, if I found that the blood of Christ had no power to cleanse, or was losing its power to cleanse from all sin.

"Ah! but you know that is n't what I mean. They don't stop there. They talk as though they had actually been set free from sin."

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I have no doubt some of them have been so emancipated from some sins; that Jesus loves them unspeakably; that He has graven them on the palms of His hands; that He keeps them as the apple of His eye. Thus, for example, they are no longer lukewarm, prayerless, ungrateful for God's mercies, or heedless of souls about them. Worldly pleasures have no fascination; they endure God's discipline patiently and gratefully.

"But do you mean to countenance claims to sinless holiness?"

I have never yet met with any making such claim. If some, upon whom God has bestowed uncommon amiability, unselfishness, and an equable temperament, among His natural gifts, should mistake the influence of these precious gifts for something more spiritual, it would not greatly surprise me. But that any child of God capable of a moderate acquaintance with himself and with the talents entrusted to him; capable of such knowledge of the holiness of God as the blessed Comforter dwelling in him could not fail to impart to him, could for an instant imagine himself absolutely sinless in the eye of that God, is simply inconceivable. That even such a one might misapply the beloved John's declaration that "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin," is not inconceivable. The growing solicitude to take full advantage of the Divine assurance, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteous-

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ness," is surely one of the precursors of that coming blessing that God has promised: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

A great deal is said about *holiness;* well, I am not surprised at that. If Christians are to think and talk about any thing I should expect them to think and talk about *holiness*. But they talk so differently. One man declares that "the doctrine of holiness, alone, can save the church." But when I ask him, What do you mean by holiness? Do you mean that anybody is perfect, absolutely sinless? he says, "No, I don't mean that. We don't pretend that any body is absolutely perfect; only God is that."

"But what then do you mean?"

"Oh, I mean that men must be entirely sanctified."

Well, now you have taken a new phrase, that puzzles me as much as the other. I turn to the dictionary and find that sanctified means "made holy," and so the reasonable interpretation of "entirely sanctified" would seem to be made entirely holy. But you say, "No, that is not it, for none but God is entirely holy."

My dear friend, if we are to get out of endless confusion we must come to definite agreement as to the meaning of the words we employ. Nothing can

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be more desirable for the followers of Christ than to find words which they can agree to use to express our common faith. It is, I think, one of Satan's devices to fasten upon sections of Christ's church words and phrases which others of His followers cannot adopt. In this way he contrives to keep us from showing a common and united front against the enemy. Now why should we continue to yield him this advantage against us, when there is no need of doing so; when we may, with painstaking, unite upon the use of words which do express our common faith?

I think the difficulty arose, at first, from the perversion of the simplest lessons God has given us. These lessons are at once simple and comprehensive; very high and yet level to the comprehension of a child. Thus God says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." It has been Satan's part, from our first parent's day until now, to represent that God does not mean *all* He says, and that He will not do *all* He threatens. He persuaded Adam of this to his ruin. Be it ours to make sure that Satan shall not persuade us that God does not mean what He says in His first great commandment.

We are all familiar with Satan's comments on the Word of God. "Of course," he says, "you are to obey the commandments, but when you love God you are to love Him in a very high and peculiar and

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mysterious way, not as you love your parents and children, brothers, sisters and friends; not at all, that is different; that is mere natural love, and too commonplace to offer to the great God. Such love as that would be belittling and unworthy." And so he thrusts upon your mind a vague and misty notion of some unreal kind of love as the only love proper to be given to God, while the real, substantial, intelligible love, which everybody comprehends, is to be kept for relatives and friends about us. Nothing could be more shrewdly fitted to the great adversary's aim to make God unreal, and to shut Him out of human hearts. God says, and Jesus echoes it, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." That 's the great first doctrine of the Bible; that is God's doctrine; His lesson, brother, to you and to me, and to every other brother, everywhere — a lesson plain to every understanding, and does not admit of two readings. He says so plainly no words could make it more plain, *I must have whole-hearted love.* Every man, woman, and child can give his *whole heart's love* to our Immanuel, to God in Christ. Every one who does this will make a total consecration of himself to Jesus. He will set himself apart for Jesus. He will write upon himself and upon all that he has, "Holiness unto the Lord." He will do this because he has received the Holy Ghost, the Comforter; for the Comforter, when thus received, takes the things of God and of Christ, and shows them to his entertainer; and among these things is

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the disciple's sonship. Jesus has made us sons and heirs.

Once receive this gift, His free gift, and the child-nature will assert itself. As a loving child you will not fail to go to your Lord with everything. You will be a witness for Jesus, and your testimony will harmonize with that of every true witness. You cannot claim sinless holiness, but you can and will claim whole-hearted love; ay, and full assurance of faith and of hope. You may not claim full perfection, but you can claim present and full salvation, both from the law and from the dominion of sin. You may in God's own words declare, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Here is ground on which we can all stand; on which we all owe it to our Lord to stand, while we make common cause against all who go about as Satan's emissaries, representing that God does not mean what He says when He demands that we love Him *with all the heart*, soul, mind, and strength. He declares, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the *praises* of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." The great majority of those who connect themselves with the Church of Christ aspire to no such type of peculiar life. They have no sentiment of priesthood, no

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conscious call to stand between the living and the dead. All who know themselves to be thus called of God, are bound by every obligation the grace of God can accumulate upon them, to be living witnesses for Him, that His whole people are called to come out from the mixed multitude of formal worshippers, and assume the station and service of faithful, devoted soldiers of the Lamb.

All improvement in this direction must begin in an improved knowledge of Jesus. "This is eternal life, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ." This knowledge is in the highest degree a matter of fact knowledge, and he who would acquire it must diligently study the facts of our Lord's history. "Search the Scriptures," He says, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." It is the loving study of this dear Lord, in His teachings and in His life, that sanctifies us. And so He prays, "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth."

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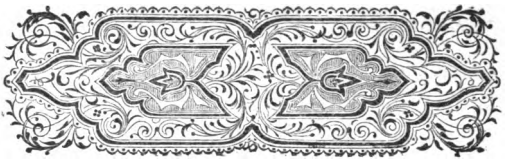

XX.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

OUR concern is with the people who are within our reach, and for whom we have a personal accountability to our Lord; and of them we shall probably be justified in saying that faith was never at a lower ebb than now. Do you ask for the evidence? You have only to open your eyes; it is all around you. Indeed, there is little need of opening your eyes. You may take the testimony through your ears. Ay, and if both eyes and ears were closed you could scarcely escape conviction from the pressure of the atmosphere. The very thought to speak or live for Christ, if there be not an uncommon strength of principle behind it, is crushed, almost before it is a thought, by the overwhelming pressure of worldliness. Test it. Take first, *personal obligation to Christ.* It is rare to find the man whose life is intelligible on the assumption that he is supremely devoted to Christ. If you know such a man look at him. He has no pride, no covetousness, no self-seeking, no indolence, no selfishness in any form.

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He is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without greed, and without guile. He can say with truth, "I seek not yours, but you; and this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind" — that is, any Christian attainments already made — "and reaching forth unto those which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." That is his sole end and aim, and all the world are welcome to know it.

Now it is not rash to affirm that this class of men is a small class. It might be larger. Recruits might be won to it if recruiting officers were abroad who were up to the work. Such officers must know their men; must know their circumstances. But whence shall we get them? Our theological seminaries can't furnish them. They will do what they can, with their apparatus. "But," they tell us, "we don't make the men; we just take the men who come to us, as they come, and do the best we can with the stuff we find in them." That's the way. Since the world began we all shift the responsibility as far as we can on to other men's shoulders. Well, we 've got to have men who can and will do the work; not merely men who can write sermons; that is not the want of our day; we must have those who can win men from worldliness to holiness, and of course such as have not only the theory, but also the practice of godliness; men who have the right to say, "Follow me;" men who can find out what their church mem-

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bers are competent to do, and smooth the way to the doing of it. Some of the pastors of our churches are concerned about the influence of the Christian Associations. Their concern is misplaced. It is not for the Christian Associations that they have need to be anxious, but for the pastors who are not apt to teach; who have no facility in starting their young people in Christian work. Those who have the love of Christ in their souls, in any considerable measure, will work. And if their nominal pastors are so absorbed in sermon-making as to have neither time nor head for initiating them, they will join a neutral class, that is, a Christian Association. The minister who would save his young men must see to it that he furnishes them more facilities for working for Christ than they can find elsewhere. We have fallen upon co-operative times, and the wise man is he who knows it and falls in with the fact, and governs himself and his church accordingly. Christian men are not so intolerant of government as some would have us believe, though they no longer believe in the divine right of kings or ministers to be self-willed or self-seeking. If men are more intolerant of theoretic inculcations than heretofore — as they are — those who have spiritual life desire more than ever to be shown how they may make that life productive. A church trained to work for Christ will not hang upon the skirts of the pastor, as some churches do, a dead weight, moving only as the pastor moves, and stopping when he stops. Were all our churches rightly

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trained, like the compensated watch, they would defy the inevitable change of life, nor dream of deserting the church and dropping all labor when age or infirmities preclude the pastor's service, and render their work the more important. What are we to think of soldiers of the cross who play truant as often as their leader is unable to attend the review of the church meeting? What of those who will attend a dress-parade once a week if their commanding officer will make himself superb? Will the kingdom of Satan be shaken by any such soldiery? Will they save even themselves? When, and where, and how is the remedy to be applied? The ministers of to-day must train the families whose sons are by-and-by to tread in their footprints; train them to work for Christ before they enter school, college, or seminary. We know that mind must set matter in motion; that the heart must move the mind. Deep convictions there must be somewhere. Some one whose heart the Lord has moved must make a beginning. And to whom may we so properly look as to those whom the Lord has put in trust with the care of souls?

Dear brethren, pray the Lord to give you deep convictions of the needs of our time. And pray Him to give you some co-workers capable of like deep convictions. Little can be done with men or women who have no deep sense of the love of Jesus, no controlling desire and purpose to recommend Jesus to others and win them to His service. The signs of our times are favorable now for an upward move.

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The Spirit of the Lord has begun to stir the hearts of some of our church members; and some of those who are coming out from the world may surely be counted on for a higher type of piety than has prevailed. Would to God that all who now come to Christ might so receive the Holy Ghost as never to recede from the high ground which young converts feel in their souls they ought always to occupy.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea there were signs; his star was seen in the East. The angel of the Lord came down upon the shepherds; and the multitude of the heavenly host were with the angels, praising God, and promising good-will to men.

When Jesus was crucified, there were signs in the heavens, and on the earth; there was darkness on the land, the veil of the temple was rent, the earth quaked, and the graves were opened.

When the apostles and first disciples began to proclaim an exalted Prince and Saviour, the Holy Ghost was poured out upon them. When released from arrest, they returned to their own company, and resuming prayer and praise to God, the place was shaken; they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spoke the Word of God with boldness; memorable signs.

The great reformation of the sixteenth century was signalized by fitting signs. Luther and his associates were filled with the Holy Ghost, and asserted

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the truth of God with great courage. The seventeenth century had its signs; our fathers were purified in the furnace of affliction. They were endued with courage to do and to endure. Like Abraham of old, they were obedient to the heavenly calling, and went out from their native land, not knowing whither they went, but well assured that afflictions awaited them. Like Paul, they consulted not with flesh and blood, but went forth, bravely resolved to make full proof of their ministry of mercy to a fallen world.

The spirit of noble daring, the spirit of heaven-born philanthropy, the spirit of missions, is an unmistakable sign of the coming of memorable days; and each age has its befitting signs. In 1857, the towering of human pride and self-indulgence had reached a climax, and the need of reformation was signalized by a strong wind of commercial disaster which rent the mountains, and brought down high looks and proud thoughts. In earlier days of the world's history, the lesson might have sufficed a generation; but dull scholars need frequent lessons, and we are already receiving another.

Can ye not discern the signs of the times? Is it true that there are signs, marked and expressive as any of former days, challenging our attention? Yes, it is true.

Notice first the extension of civil liberty and the toleration of evangelical Christianity. See how the nations are everywhere opening to the reception of the Gospel.

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2. Notice the constant expansion of the missionary spirit, harmonizing with this.

3. Estimate, if possible, the effects of the great revivals of the past three years, in preparing the way of the Lord.

4. Do not fail to consider the spreading of the Scriptures in all lands, particularly in France, Italy and Russia. In France, five hundred thousand of the soldiers have committed the Gospel of St. John to memory, entire. In China, the rebels who appear fast becoming the dominant party, have received not a little of the Bible, it is more than probable from Judson's labors on the borders of the land.

5. Notice the upheaving of the nations, and the very striking correspondence of their condition with our Saviour's description in the twenty-first chapter of Luke. From China to Italy, has there not been on the earth, "distress of nations with perplexity?" And lately in our fatherland, have not "men's hearts been failing them for fear, and for looking after things which are coming on the earth?" Their fears of a French invasion may not be realized; but how often has the undefined shadow of a coming evil been true to the reality, though varying in form from the impending calamity. That sins well suited to provoke the chastisement of the Lord infect all Christendom is only too apparent. And therefore it is that men's hearts fail them for fear.

was sig[illegible]nd now, at length, the finger of destiny points sociates wel[illegible] at our own land, hitherto almost exempt

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from the afflictions of the nations. It is hardly possible for any dispassionate observer to consider the course of the leaders of the secession treason, and impute the full measure of the crime to them. No, we shall be blind indeed, not to discern the evidence that this is nothing less than the doing of the great adversary of all good. The Jubilee of our Missionary Board was not an event to escape his notice; not a commemoration about which he could be indifferent. From five to ten thousand persons, representing the intelligence and the piety of hundreds of thousands of the saints of the Most High assembled to return thanks to Almighty God for his great work so well begun, of giving the kingdoms of this world to Christ; think you Satan could be insensible to that? No!

7. Once more, observe the spread of the spirit of prayer. What an omen is this? Men everywhere daily assembling by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to make known their requests to God; and by necessary consequence, meeting so many, and such marked answers to prayer, that faith in God has been set forward centuries on centuries, in the past three years.

No wonder, then, that Satan has come down in great wrath, because of the accumulating signs that his time is short. His kingdom decayeth and waxeth old; who can say that it is not ready to vanish away?

Can ye not discern the signs of the times?

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Are not China, Japan, India, Africa, France, Italy, and many more sections of the earth yielding to the sword of the Spirit? Is not Europe melting before the brightness of his coming? Has not Satan, like a roaring lion, in fresh rage, come over to this hitherto almost neglected people, because his fortresses, once so strong in other lands, are now undermined and tottering to their fall? Our small population, small as compared with his uncounted millions, may have seemed hitherto almost insignificant to him. But the power of prayer has awakened the demon to the fact that faith is more fatal to his power than numbers. That the agreement in prayer, perhaps we may say, commencing in America and spreading through Christendom, has greatly alarmed him, we may easily believe. That it may have stimulated him to endeavor to break the spell by stirring up enmity and bitterness between brethren in this land is not difficult of belief. To turn the praying people of this land from prayer, he would surely spare no pains; and what so likely, in his estimation, to do this, as the fear of war?

But in the Lord is our strength; and in the turning of our people by prayer and earnest supplication to him, there is hope, not only of deliverance out of this special danger, but of bringing on a better day for the cause of Christ than any we have ever seen.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

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XXI.

THE SECRET OF BLESSEDNESS.

SUPPOSE it had been put to you to guess what would be the first instruction of the Son of God to the lost men he came to redeem; would it have occurred to you, do you think, to say, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit?*"

But since He has said it, is there any difficulty in approving what he said, as the thing most fitting and most needed? To-day, what stands most in the way of personal improvement? Is it not thinking of one's self more highly than we ought?

What is the origin of this evil? It is simply that God is not in the heart, nor in the thought of the self-satisfied: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

It is only by excluding God from our minds, that we can be self-satisfied. It is just this that men commonly do. And so when called upon to repent,

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the prompt response is, "Of what should I repent? I am not a bad man, thank God; quite the contrary. I am an honest man. I pay my debts. I am a good citizen; a good neighbor, husband, father, friend. I am a good deal better man than some who profess more." All this, you see, is bringing one's self to man's tribunal; not to God's. The race is a lost race. Shall we take a lost man for our standard of comparison? No, indeed! Jesus came to redeem these lost ones from their sins. And therefore he pronounces that man blessed who has turned from man's tribunal to God's; who has compared himself with God, and found occasion for deep sorrow, shame, self-condemnation, repentance, and earnest calling upon God.

To such the kingdom of Heaven is offered; eternal life. "And this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Here is at once the remedy for the greatest of evils, and the secret and recipe for the highest happiness. To know God in Christ so intimately as to become dead to self and sin, and alive unto God, through Christ Jesus our Lord. In the light of His love all our righteousness becomes as filthy rags; and we would as soon glory in the one as in the other.

Let us see how this is in common life. Here is one man making himself unhappy because he has fewer of the good things of this life than some of his

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fellows. But "a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." Jesus does not say, "Blessed are the rich." On the contrary, he does say, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of Heaven." Another sorrows for lack of health, strength, unattainable wisdom, or skill, or the honor of man.

Is his blessedness precluded through lack of either, or all of these? No; but he thinks so; and thinks so because he has never subordinated his will to the will of God; his wisdom to the wisdom of God. Notwithstanding he has been warned of God, that riches are deceitful, that man's wisdom is a snare, that the honor of man is a hinderance hardly to be surmounted; he is clamorous for these; and sure that to him, at all events, they would be helpful. This is the mistake of the race; of the people of eighteen hundred years ago; and of the people of to-day. Let us then look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, He humbled himself to become a man; He was born of low estate; He preached the Gospel to the poor; He made friends of those who needed him; He ate with publicans and sinners; He bore the griefs and carried the sorrows of all suffering ones. When He was reviled, He reviled not again. When He was threatened, He answered not. He did all this "knowing" — not only that He was sinless, but "that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God."

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Brethren, if these things are so, what manner of persons ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness, seeing that each and every comparison of our lives with His, reveals pride, indolence, impatience, ingratitude, and all manner of unprofitableness.

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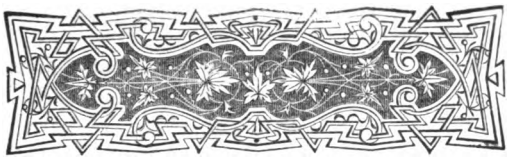

XXII.

PRAYER-MEETINGS.

THE question is often asked, "How shall we render prayer-meetings more interesting?" The question has as many meanings as persons to ask it. I once heard a brother say, "What we want in this meeting is not exhortation, not instruction; we want experience." I could not withhold the inquiry, "Do you want an experience which is not instructive? We do not want the experience of an empty head or an unfeeling heart." One says, "What we want is a good many speakers." "No," says another, "we want a good many prayers, and the three-minute rule enforced." Another says, "We want a good deal of singing, prompt and hearty."

"No, brother, no; we may want these things, but these things are not our main want. We want a full spiritual life; we want Christians attuned to continuous sympathy with God and His Word, and with man and his circumstances, and the power to connect the one with the other. Our ordinary attempts

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to get up a good prayer-meeting are simply endeavors to get more out of our members than there is in them. The utterances in exhortation, exposition, experience, and prayer can never much exceed the daily life.

Well, what is to be done about it?

Ah! that 's for you to say; and if it is to be said intelligently, we must first agree upon piety, what it is.

It is the fear of God; the love of God; the worship of God; the service of God. It is a practical fear and love; a controlling fear and love, involving conscientious and loving worship and service, with heart enough in it to make us ready for any sacrifice. Now this brings us round to the question, "How shall we get such love and service out of the whole body of our church members, and especially in the prayer-meetings?"

I answer, by prevailing upon them to heed the Apostle's injunction: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." This they will not heed to-day; therefore to-day you cannot, from the whole body of the church, have more interesting prayer-meetings. You must therefore begin with individuals. Every individual who can be persuaded to do this you may count in as one contribution toward your desire. Each one who does this will begin at once to have an experience, and an in-

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structive experience; a conflict with the world, and with the things which are in the world. When he speaks to man or to God out of that experience he will speak to the hearts of his brethren, and his words and prayers will make part of an interesting prayer-meeting. There is not a day in which the living, earnest Christian does not find occasion in his secular business to serve God with what costs him much. There is not a day in which he who takes all things from God will not find God in all things. Business is no hinderance to prayer, to any man who gets his business from the Lord. But there are numbers of church members who have not God in all their thoughts from Sunday to Sunday; and so on week-days they have in effect no God to pray to, and work of God to pray over. And this is the reason why prayer-meetings are not more interesting; nor can they be more interesting till all this is changed. Christian men must keep out of a business which cannot be prayed over; must do only such business as can be prayed over; only so much as can be prayed over; only in such ways as can be commended to God for His sanction.

I speak as to wise men; to experienced business men; and you know that this is so. The hard-working man who is working for God, building himself up on his most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, and keeping himself in the love of God, never finds his work a hinderance to prayer in or out of the prayer-meetings.

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XXIII.

CHRIST HERE AND NOW.

IS it not strange, that while we are all so ready to say, Yes, "*Christ is all*," there is still as much need as ever to insist, urge, entreat, "Oh, believe in your *present* Saviour! Believe in the *living* Christ! Believe that Jesus is *nearer to you* than the nearest and dearest of all beside."

Just now, as truly as eighteen hundred years ago, Jesus is ever saying, "According to your faith be it unto you;" "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth;" I am ready to reveal Myself to you to the utmost of your desire to receive Me; you may be as near and as dear to Me as your heart craves; but remember, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple; much more can he not be specially near to me and conscious of My nearness to him, and of My peculiar love for him.

Are you exclaiming, "There it is again! I don't understand it! If Jesus is so near, so tender, so loving, as you represent Him, why must I *forsake all*

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for Him? Does he grudge us the human friendships he himself has formed us to appreciate? Would He stifle the tastes He created in us? Is there any religion or virtue in turning our hearts to stone toward all human relations? Must one be insensible to all that is good and lovely in order to be acceptable to Christ?"

My dear brother, Jesus Himself has answered you; "According to your faith be it unto you." He has said enough. Only *your faith* can interpret what He has said. His words do not perplex the heart that is full of faith. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." There is a secret for love to unlock. The key is freely tendered you. To them that are without the pale of tender love, all these things are spoken *in parables*. Is this peculiar to Jesus only? Do we not find the same thing everywhere among men? Do you reveal yourself to all alike? Could you do it if you would? Is it not impossible to open yourself fully except to loving sympathy? Can you find such loving sympathy in one who will run no risks for you, who is closely calculating whether or not it will pay to be outspoken and unlimited in devotion to you? Would not the world be a wilderness and a desert to you, if you could not feel that you had some friend or friends whose friendship had no limits but your need of them and your love for them?

Well, as it is with you in this matter, so is it with Jesus; He desires devoted friends. To such he is

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both willing and desirous to reveal himself. Are you a devoted friend? Are you in truth prepared to ask, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? Then seize your privilege. Lay yourself anew at His feet. Consider well how much you mean by it. Are you desirous that He should employ in His service every talent He has entrusted to you? Then tell Him so. Look about you, and consider how you can invest your powers so as most to honor Him, and to induce others to do the same. Quench not the Holy Spirit ever prompting you to holy enterprise, but encourage His suggestions by your promptitude in turning them to the best account.

Be sure there are revelations of Jesus' love awaiting His devoted friends, far, far excelling anything you have ever received from any dear friend of your family. If you would have them, do not waste precious time in bandying questions as to why things are thus and so; or why they need be so; but put Him to the proof by renewed, earnest, well-considered, and all-including consecrations of yourself and all you have and are, and all you may possibly become. And so shall you know for yourself that the love of Jesus far exceeds all other love; that Jesus Himself is the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely.

O where is our enthusiasm for Jesus? It ought to dim the lustre of all other enthusiasms as the rising sun puts out the twinkling stars.

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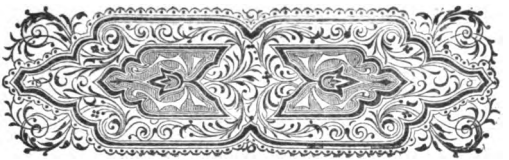

XXIV.

IS GOD GOOD?

SOME minds are never at rest, because, they say, there is so much unhappiness in the world. If God were good would He permit so much suffering? There are others who dare not question the goodness of God, whose question is, *How* can a good God permit it? All this questioning proceeds from one mistaken assumption, namely this: that happiness, immediate, present happiness, is the first thing to be considered. Their notion is that a *good* God would surely put this first in all His thoughts and plans for man. I suspect that to most men it never once occurs to question if they are surely right in thus thinking. But persons who think thus, make one grand leap over all God's *holiness* and man's *sinfulness*, as something not needful to pause over; something which has no relation whatever to the matter in hand. "We were speaking," say they, "of the *goodness* of God."

But God is just as holy as He is good. And He hates sin as strongly as He loves holiness. And as

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His holiness fills heaven and makes the atmosphere of the place; as it fills the earth and makes all that is really good in it; as sin is the direst of evils and entirely opposed to His holiness; the first and greatest thing God can do for man, is to wean and purge him from his sin, and transform him into His own likeness. This, unquestionably, is the first thing with God.

In pursuing this grand paramount aim it often becomes necessary for God to invade man's happiness. Many a time only the sharpest trial will wean a man from his idols; only such trials will secure attention to those Christian graces which God holds in the highest esteem. And so it is written, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience."

When we place a child in a good school, is the child's immediate happiness the first consideration with us? No; our first consideration is the most valuable, useful, and suitable education. This education, we say, will greatly contribute to the happiness of our child in the end. For the present, it will call for many a self-denial and much patience; not with the intent to diminish the child's happiness, but to modify, to ennoble, and ultimately greatly to increase it.

God's care for man's happiness is incomparably greater than we think. But God's estimate of happiness and what makes happiness is very unlike ours.

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Mere freedom from physical pain and inconvenience does not weigh with Him as it commonly weighs with us. The skilful surgeon whose operation is to save a life does not bestow very much thought upon the brief pain which his operation incidentally involves. As a humane man he would give as little unnecessary pain as may be; but his absorbing concern is to save life.

Our heavenly Father's care is to save life; to deliver us from every spiritual malady; to recreate us in the perfect image of His Son. In persistently following out this design, through a lifetime, with infinite patience, tenderness, and skill, is there not more abundant evidence that God is good than we could infer from the filling of our cup with natural pleasures, or the screening us from poverty and pain?

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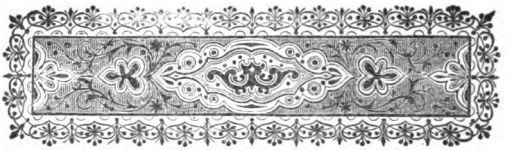

XXV.

AM I A CHRISTIAN?

AM I really in Christ? To many a man this is a distressing and unanswerable question. Not merely to such as ask it casually and carelessly and then forget it, but to those who ask it often and thoughtfully, who in fact never lay the question by. Let me tell you, brother, why you find the question unanswerable.

1. There is no probability that it is, as you have thought, because *there must needs be some* who *cannot* know; and because you are probably one of that number.

2. It is not because you are a *sinner*. *All* men are sinners. All men are *peculiarly* sinful. All men are *great* sinners. The answer to all this is, Christ died for the *chief* of sinners, and is able to save *to the uttermost* all who come unto God by Him.

3. The real reason is, that you have never settled in your own soul that *God is*. Observe, I do not say that you have any doubt that there is a God. Of course, you believe *that*. *Every* one believes that.

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But to believe there is a God is one thing; to believe that the God of the Bible is, and that He is ever present with you; that He is what He says He is to you; a loving, helpful, constant, omnipotent Friend; — that is much more. Now it is written, "He that cometh to God must believe that *He is*." Your trouble is that you have n't settled *that*. You ask, How can I settle it? I answer, By obeying your Lord's command: *Believe!* Do not think to evade your obligation by replying, That is the very thing I cannot do. You can obey. You can believe. I know that faith is the *gift* of God. I know too that He is willing to give it to you. When God made you in His own image, He gave you a power to will, savoring almost of His own omnipotence. He made you, in this, able to trample your hinderances under foot. Let me tell you my own experience: When I began to pray, I said, as I kneeled at the foot of my bed, "Now I am not going to pray to this bed-post, the bureau, the walls, or the ceiling, I am going to pray to my Lord. He is here; I *know* that he is here. Were my father in the adjoining room, though I see him not, hear him not, yet, assured of his being there, by raising my voice I could make him hear. I know Jesus is here. There is no need to raise my voice; there is no wall between us; only a thin veil of sense; only a mist of habit, the habit of not realizing. I am going to break through that veil and mist. I *will* speak with Jesus, I will tell Him all my heart; He will hear me, and I will therefore tell Him just

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what I think, feel, wish, intend; and I will not let Him go except He bless me. Not one single wish or utterance of any kind will I permit but what expresses just what I wish Him to hear, but just what I mean He shall hear; and I will never give over praying until I know He hears me; until I realize His hearing, as entirely as I realize that my father and my mother hear me when I am speaking with them." Sometimes it required a struggle of two, three, or even five minutes to break through the veil; occasionally even a longer struggle was required; it might extend to seven or eight minutes; until the Spirit taught me this bit of common sense; that a speedy and sure cure for wandering thoughts is, to tell the Lord all about the things wandered to. Now, my dear brother, if you will adopt this manner of dealing with your Lord and with yourself, you will settle for once and forever that God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

4. The real reason why you have been unable to assure yourself that you are *in Christ*, is, that you have been *willing* to be *elsewhere*. You have never seized the right to say,

> "I'm a poor sinner and *nothing at all*,
> But Jesus Christ is my *all in all*."

You have not been willing to be nothing at all. You have had your pride to save, your self-love, your love of ease, love of money, of man's esteem, or what not;—*you* know what. And you know Jesus says,

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"Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple;" and much more can he not have the joy of *knowing* that he is my disciple.

5. The reason you do not know whether you are in Christ is, that you are not prompt and thorough in repentance and in confessing to Him your sins. You are ready to assure me that *there* I am mistaken; sin is such a burden to you, you are always confessing it; owning in every prayer that you are a miserable sinner, erring and straying like a lost sheep, and with no health in you; you set apart monthly seasons for self-examination and for humiliation, and bow your head like a bulrush. Yes, my brother, I know all about *that*. For aught I know, that may answer some occasions, but it will not answer *your* occasions. Vital union to Christ has the same vitality in it that the most intense and tender human friendship has. Are you always regaling your dearest friend with wholesale complaints of your unworthiness? If a breath of mist even *begins* to rise between you and your dearest friend do you indulge in figures of lost sheep and filthy rags? Do you not rather instantly ask, "Beloved, what is it? Have I given you pain?" Does not your quickened spirit instantly scent out your failure in faithfulness at any point? And are not the confession and the reparation *instantaneous!*

6. The real reason why you do not know yourself vitally one with Christ is, you do not believe in the forgiveness of sins — of *your* sins; and this notwith-

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standing He has said, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." You do not believe that the "blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin." You have no doubt that it cleanses from sin in general; but you consider that there is a *peculiarity* in your sin that not even the blood of Jesus can or does cleanse. In so doing you imagine that you are cherishing a becoming *modesty;* whereas your modesty is merely *unbelief*, and you are frustrating the grace of God. That favor to the undeserving which He is so willing and eager to bestow you will not permit Him to bestow. And the reason why you will not accept His proffered forgiveness of your sins, is that on which Naaman acted when Elijah was ready to remove his leprosy; "I thought he would do it in my way; after the pattern in my mind; as he did with some one of whom I have read or heard." You propose to wait for deeper or different impressions; for some new revelation or manifestation.

My dear brother, in this you are wrong, all wrong. Not content with God's method of justification and of sanctification, you go about seeking some way more in accordance with your ideal. In doing this you postpone indefinitely your own happiness, and, which is worse, you grieve the Spirit of God, that infinitely tender and gracious Friend and Comforter who dwells with you and in you, for the very purpose of guiding you into all truth and into perfect peace.

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You have but one thing to do: Believe! Believe His precious assurance; "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That means *you;* that means *now.* And it is *always now.* Procrastination is not only the thief of time, it is the thief of peace also. Believe in the very instant of your confession; believe in the fulness of His forgiveness. Accept that forgiveness on the instant. In the same instant render grateful thanks; and go on your way rejoicing, and renewing the total consecration of yourself, and all you have, and are, and ever can become, to Him who loved you, died for you, and washed you in His blood.

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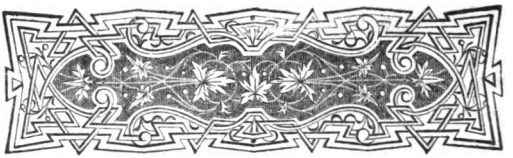

XXVI.

DESPISING OUR PRIVILEGE.

YES, that is just what we do; we despise our highest privilege. Is there a greater privilege than that of realizing habitually the presence and tender love of Jesus? a love incomparably greater than that of our most intimate friend.

"No," you will answer, "certainly not; but to charge us with despising this privilege! — what is that but one more instance of the reckless use of language which is so common in our day?"

Hold a moment, dear friend, and I think I shall convince you that this is not one of the unconsidered expressions which exceed all warrant. When the invitations to the supper of the king were issued, and the invited guests began with one consent to make excuse — "I have bought a piece of land, or five yoke of oxen; I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come" — did they not in fact despise the invitation? Do not paltry excuses for not accepting a proffered boon mark a low estimate of that boon? Our Lord says, "If a man love me he will keep my

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words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Here is surely a glorious offer, on most available terms. Not to catch at it eagerly, and with gratitude, is to hold it in small esteem. To make a few and intermittent endeavors for this incomparable possession and then to give it up is to despise it.

The habitual realization of Jesus as his present, personal, loving Friend is the highest privilege conferred on man. This privilege is offered to me, to you, to each and to every disciple; it is freely offered; it is earnestly pressed upon our acceptance. Not to accept it is to despise it.

Do you say "Nay, not so: for though I cannot deny that in words it is in some sense offered, yet practically it is as though it were not, for I cannot lay hold upon Him; I cannot make Him real?"

Then, dear friend, you fail either because you have not so desired this friendship with Jesus as promptly and always to subordinate all other friendships to this; or because you have not given heed to the declaration, "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." To tolerate a shadow of a doubt that God is, is to throw away all satisfying friendship with Him. Do you ask, "How can I be blamed when, do the best I can, there still remains this discouraging feeling; perhaps He is here, perhaps hot; perhaps He is listening to me, perhaps He does n't care to?"

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Take His own answer to your question: "Then shall ye know, if ye *follow on to know* the Lord." You perhaps remember that in Bunyan's Pilgrim armed men resisted Christian's entrance into the house where he was to learn much that was to speed him joyfully on his way. God tests your earnestness to enter into the closest friendship and fellowship with Him, by permitting obstacles to stand across your path; obstacles, mainly, of your own creating. Can you wonder that when you have for years treated Jesus as though He were not near you, nor interested in you, you now cannot easily gain the consciousness which you have permitted to pass away from you? But if you are in true and deep earnest to possess this consciousness, the way is open to you. Begin at once. Remember that there is measureless power in the *determined will.* Be resolved that you will call upon your Lord in unwavering confidence in His presence, and in His kind attention to every word you utter. Be careful to say to Him only and exactly what you think, and feel, and wish, and intend.

Find out what is the one thing which hinders your realizing Jesus as your ever present, real, helpful Friend. Then hasten to put the hinderance from you. Cry mightily to your Lord for help. Set yourself to do the work of a friend. Stimulate your ingenuity to find out ways of pleasing and of honoring Him. If you are but earnest and persistent in so doing, nothing but a miracle can possibly prevent your success.

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XXVII.

HOW TO BE SAVED.

WHEN any one asks, "What must I do to be saved?" he is answered: "Repent and believe the Gospel;" "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins;" "Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out;" "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" "Repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance;" "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;" and it is sometimes added, "I dare not answer you but in these very words of the Bible."

We may well fear to return any answer that does not accord with these declarations of the Bible; but it is a serious error to suppose that we have discharged our duty, and have done all we can do for an inquirer, when we have given him some one or more of these Scriptural directions. We might as

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well think that we had done all we could for a hungry child, when we had given him a bag of meal or flour. We know indeed that every troubled sinner wants a Saviour, and a Gospel of Salvation; but we also know that he must taste before he will see that the Lord is good, and that he must trust before he can know the blessedness of the man that trusteth in Him; and it is our business to tempt his taste, and to encourage his trust, by offering the invitations of the Gospel in winning words, seasoned with abundant illustrations of the love and tenderness of Christ. These are abundantly furnished in the Bible, and so varied as to fit the necessities of a great variety of cases. It is for us to find out what are the particular necessities of the individual who needs our help, and this we may do by encouraging the inquirer to state his own case.

Thus one will say, "I know it is necessary to become a Christian; I am not content to continue as I now am; I know that I am a sinner; but I can't say that I have any deep conviction of this, or that I feel very much about it. What can you say to me?"

I would say, that, like the prodigal son, you have wandered very far away from your father's house. You may not have spent all, or any, of your substance in riotous living; yet, have you none the less attempted to satisfy the hunger of a famishing soul with husks. For that you know it is necessary to become a Christian, is proof that your soul has been starved. You already labor and are heavy laden,

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and your labor will become more laborious, and your burden more heavy, until you come to Christ. It may, or may not be, that you will have a deeper conviction of your sinfulness before you give yourself up to Christ; that may depend upon circumstances not within your control. But it is very proper that you shall call to mind God's unnumbered kindnesses to you; and that you should inquire what return you have made to Him; that you should consider how you have been treating him, while his mercies have been inviting you to repentance."

But you say, I don't know what it is to come to Christ, or how to get to him. I am sure I should be glad to do so, if I did or could.

Are you sure of this? That you would be glad to escape unhappiness, and to be free from the fear of punishment, I can easily believe; but coming to Christ is much more than this. Every unconverted man has a will of his own; a will to be and to do many things contrary to the will of Christ. In coming to Christ, the very first step is to subordinate our self-will to the will of Christ; one must be willing to sit at the feet of Jesus and be taught by him in all things, and immediately on being taught the will of Christ, he must adopt that will as the rule of his life. If you are prepared to do *this*, then you are prepared to come to Christ; you are prepared to look on Christ without prejudice, which no man can do till he is ready to subordinate his own will to Christ's will. When you are ready to do this, it is not difficult to

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come to Christ, which is, in fact, to love Christ. When once you surrender your will to Christ, you need nothing but knowledge. It is true that no man can come to Christ except the Father draw him; but when a man is ready to bow his will to the will of Christ, it is because the Father has already sent his Holy Spirit to draw him. By the light of this truth you may see where you are, and what you have to do; so, if you are ready, say and do this:—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

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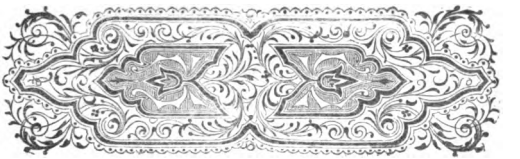

XXVIII.

THE INDWELLING COMFORTER.

THE unbelief of avowed Christians in the indwelling of the Holy Ghost is one of the greatest evils of our day. What would be the answer, if we should ask of a score of the members of any one or more of our churches, "Have you received the Holy Ghost?" And what if it should be further asked, "Have you the Holy Ghost dwelling in you?" Some would answer, "It would not be modest in me to say it, even if I thought so." Ah, is modesty inconsistent with truth? Is it immodest for you to profess supreme love for Christ? Immodest to admit that you have received the seal of his responsive love? Surely, not if you have it; for has He not commanded you to let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven? Can you in any way more effectively witness a good confession than by the fearless avowal that the Holy One dwells in you, and that you are in all things governed by his counsel? and by a life consistent with this avowal?

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Some would plead their fear of self-righteousness as a bar to an ingenuous answer; some would actually make a righteousness of refusing "to witness a good confession;" they would persuade themselves, and others, that they are too good, too virtuous, too reverent of God, even to pretend that they entertain that Heavenly Visitant from day to day, from hour to hour. The truth is, the consciousness of the indwelling Spirit depends upon the ever-conscious preference of God's will to our own. As in the early days of the Church, "no man could (or would) say that Jesus was the Christ, except by the spirit of the Lord," so now no man can truly and ever say, "Not my will, but thine be done," except by the spirit of the Lord. Of course, those of the disciples who are daily doing their *own* work, rather than the Lord's, cannot have the conscious indwelling and guidance of the Holy Ghost. There is such a thing as being filled with faith and with the Holy Ghost from the beginning of the religious life and thenceforth. The command to be led by the Spirit, to live in the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, is in full force; and enforced by the assurance, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Woe to the man who refuses to believe, or to receive the boon; good were it for that man that he had never heard the gracious offer, rather than that he should set no value upon this purchase of the Saviour's blood.

Many affect to deplore the *withdrawal* of the Holy Spirit; some actually deceive themselves into

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believing that he does, at times, withdraw from very good Christians, and leave them, as our Saviour said he would not leave them, orphaned. Such are little alarmed when the pall of insensibility settles down upon their souls; they content themselves with thinking that such is the way of the Spirit, and with feeble wishes that he may some day come again to his temple. How different is this from the teaching of inspiration: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God;" "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his;" "Know ye not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

Heedless of Christ's explicit promise, John xiv: 16–18: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter. . . . I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you;" multitudes have forsaken the obvious meaning of the promise and gone about to seek a solace and a substitute for what is here promised to simple faith in a supposed second physical coming of Christ. They cannot live by faith on the Son of God, they must have sight. They seem to have forgotten that St. Paul himself declared, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." And this for the obvious reason that we know him through the indwelling Spirit. He that has thus received the promise of the Father, and of the Son, needs no such stimulus to his faith as is alleged to be found in the

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expectation of another personal or physical coming of Christ in 1868, or in 1886.

I WOULD give all I have in the world to know that I am certainly a child of God."

Our Heavenly Father will not sell the assurance you desire at that or at any other price; but he will make you a free gift of it, simply upon your complying with certain conditions which are indispensable.

"What are those conditions?"

The first is that you shall be a child. It is plain that you cannot certainly know yourself to be a child until you are a child.

"I hope I am that now."

A well-founded hope is an excellent possession; but I understood you to wish for more; you wished to know absolutely. This implies, does it not, that you are not entirely satisfied with your hope?

"That is true; I do wish to convert hope into certainty."

This can be done only by complying with the entreaty of the Apostle Paul: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, unto God; which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." For one who covets conformity to the worldly ways and worldly principles of those about him; for one who is unprepared

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to give himself wholly and entirely away to Christ, it is quite useless to sigh for the spirit of adoption; to long for the certainty of being a child of God. That certainly arises from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. He will not dwell with idols; he will not make his abode in a heart that is not wholly and heartily surrendered to him. But into every heart that is thus wholly and heartily offered to him — that is made ready for him, he will come, and come at once. He will feed the soul that hungers and thirsts after righteousness; for he says such are blessed, and that they shall be filled.

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XXIX.

RECEIVING CHRIST.

HOW is it with you now, M.; have you made any progress Christ-ward since I saw you?"

"I can't say that I have. It's just about the same; and I don't see what I am to do to make it different. I have done everything I know how to do; and if I had my life to live over again, I don't see how I could do differently."

"Do you pray daily, and study the Bible?"

"Yes; but I don't see that it does any good."

"When you pray, do you realize Christ's presence, and his interest in you?"

"No; I can't say I do. I don't see how he can feel any interest in me. I have lived a mere selfish life, and have n't deserved his love, and don't see how I can expect it."

"Do you desire it?"

"Oh, yes; I should like very much to have it, if I could."

"Well, if that be really so, and if you will just tell *him* so, and ask him what he would have you to

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do to win it, that will be real prayer, and one that he will be likely to answer."

"But it don't seem to me as if it would accomplish anything, or make any change in my future life. I can't feel sure that I shall do any better in the future."

"One thing at a time, my dear friend; if you desire God's love — really desire it — you can have it, if it be the one absorbing desire of your heart."

"But it don't seem so to me. It don't seem to me that he can find anything in me to love."

"You have but too much reason to say it; but, fortunately, what cannot be found in you is found in Christ; he has bought you with his blood; and now offers to dwell with you and in you. If you receive Jesus, all will go well with you; for it is written, 'As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' You want power to become a child; receive Christ, and he will give you the power."

"But if I tell him that I do receive him, I shan't feel any differently; I shan't act any differently."

"In short, you don't believe that there is any efficacy in obedience; that God values it, or will reward it; and all your unbelief has no better ground than that it don't seem to you that it would do any good. What right have you thus to reject the plain testimony of God? You have never put him to the proof. You have never received Christ, though he has long knocked for admittance. You have never

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entrusted the keeping of yourself to him. Thousands of times his gentle and winning entreaty, 'Come unto me,' has been repeated in your hearing, but you have never come. You reject all evidence of the reality and earnestness of the invitation."

"Well, I 've tried, and I can't change my heart. I know I have got to feel, and to do, differently; but somehow I can't get hold of it."

"Do you remember the story of the man who had a withered hand? Christ said to him, 'Stretch forth thine hand.' Now, this man's arm, as I understand the narrative, was completely withered. He might, I suppose, have said with entire truth, 'Lord, I cannot stretch forth mine hand; it is an utter impossibility; I have n't the power to do it.' He had no power to do it; but one thing he could do; he could put forth the *will* to do it. He did that; that was obedience; and Christ gave the power; and he was healed. I know that the faith in Christ, which I wish you to exercise, and without which it is impossible to please God, is the *gift of God;* but he gives it to those who exercise the will to obey. The Lord invites you to prove him. Do it."

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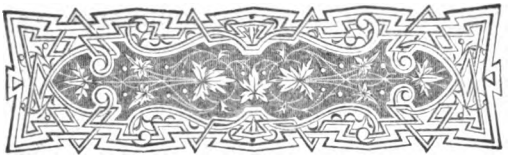

XXX.

LAY WORK A BOUNDEN DUTY.

SOME things are plain; this for one; if we pray honestly, "Thy kingdom come," we ought studiously to inquire: "What can *I* do in furtherance of my prayer?"

Well, I can examine some of the hinderances to the grace of God. He desires the salvation of men. In order to their salvation, He would have them enlightened, instructed as to his kind desires and intentions in their behalf, and invited to accept eternal life.

One of the most serious hinderances is the supposition that this work devolves chiefly, ay, almost exclusively on ministers. Nothing can be more untrue. Ministers are captains of the Lord's hosts. Leaders, guides, instructors, they may and ought to be; but the hosts of the adversary are to be encountered man by man; and God has given to the rank and file the force which is to do the work, as truly as to their leaders. It is quite true that every man is not a Moody; but it is just as true, that to every man has

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been entrusted some one or more talents to be used for the Master; and no man knows how much has been entrusted to him, until he has most energetically and persistently endeavored to employ all he can find to use. Do you think Moody knew what the Lord had given him when he first attempted a few words in the prayer-meeting, and was advised by a pastor of large experience to refrain from such endeavors? It was an essential part of the very discipline that developed him, to push on in the face of this opposing opinion. He chose not to wait for Saul's armor, but to use smooth or rough stones from the brook in a less public place, and where such ordnance as he had, might and did do execution.

It is an utter and dire mistake to suppose that the salvation of men through "preaching the Word," means only by the pronouncing of well-labored sermons by highly educated and ordained ministers. We may well be instructed by those who are arrayed against us. The Romish system provides for the discovery and enlistment of capability of every kind, and in every degree. It taxes every income; it uses its entire resources; it maintains an unrelaxing hold upon the conscience of its subjects. We have not as yet asserted the claim of our Sovereign head upon each member of His Church for service; at all events have not made it to be felt. Any formal assent to this claim is commonly given with a mental reservation, and with a private interpretation; as for ex-

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ample: I am not to be expected *personally* to disseminate the Gospel. I can't *speak* to men, *teach* or *give* them *tracts* or *books*. My business is to earn money. I will help support those who do this work.

The Master says: "Freely ye have received; freely give." The servant replies: "I pray thee have me excused." And the leaders of the host too often unwisely think such may be excused if they will give ten or more per cent of their accumulations to Church charities. The *Master* demands *total* consecration of himself and of all he is and has; the servant proposes a compromise of ten per cent, — not even then of what he is, but of the *money* he is permitted to acquire. Is this to be allowed? Never! It is worse than compounding felony. The unalterable demand remains in unabated force. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all thy heart*, soul, mind, and strength." Not a single man in all the Lord's host is at liberty to engage in any business which precludes his living, and preaching the Gospel every day. No Christian may engage in any business transaction which will arrest the flow of Christian love — love for a single soul, or hinder his free utterance of his Master's claim upon that soul. By this sure standard every business must be tried. To engage in any business which forbids or hinders this care for souls, is to rob God. Really consecrated souls may not contend with worldly men for wealth and business reputation.

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XXXI.

WHAT CHRIST ASKS OF LAYMEN.

IT is pretty generally admitted, that the layman is as strongly bound to total consecration as the minister. In the face of the two tables of the law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself," who would dare take any other position? Every layman, then, is bouud freely to receive and freely to give the Gospel of Christ. He is an enlisted soldier. As such he may not entangle himself in any disqualifying affairs. He must separate himself to the service of Christ. It is his supreme honor and privilege that he may do so.

"But," asks some one, "do you mean to deny that he may properly engage in any secular business or profession?"

He may engage in any business or profession that does not divert or subtract from the largest, purest, most effective service for Christ and His church; any business compatible with his living in Christ, as a branch in the vine; and upon Christ as one who

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eats His flesh, and drinks His blood; to whom Christ is as manna and as bread; who feeds upon Christ by unintermittent faith, and is daily and hourly growing into His image. No business or profession incompatible with this is open to any brother in Christ.

"It strikes me you are putting this pretty strong; he may engage in nothing, you say, that would subtract from the largest, purest, most effective service for Christ. Why, you can't mean that a business man must be praying and preaching all the time?"

He must be always in Christ; on Christ's own testimony, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." And, again, "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." He must "pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks." Whether he eat or drink, or whatsoever he does, he must "do all to the glory of God." These are the business rules divinely established, and never rescinded. He must be always a witness for Christ; his life must be always a true rendering, though his tongue be not always quoting the Gospel of Christ.

"If you are familiar with business, you must know that in these days any business worth pursuing is very absorbing. It is as much as any man's reputation is worth, to be known to be interested in anything outside of business. Are you prepared to risk the consequences of what you recommend?"

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Do you think it unsafe to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness?"

"I think that an intelligent man undertaking any business in our times, will find it wise, and absolutely necessary to give that business his undivided attention. You are familiar with the saying, 'A man who attempts several instruments will find himself beaten by him who keeps to one.' Our successful business men are men of no ordinary powers; every faculty is strung to the highest tension; and they exhaust their trained powers to the limit of endurance, six days in every week. Of course you will agree with me that the Christian lawyer, doctor, or merchant is found, to the extent of his capacities, to be the ablest lawyer, doctor, or merchant in his place. He ought to be *that*, if he is to be an example to others."

It is written, "Be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." Can it be shown, do you think, that the Christian most nearly perfect, could we identify him, would necessarily be found "the ablest merchant?"

"Well, each profession has its own canons, its qualifications and its tests. I suppose some characteristics which recommend a man as a Christian, would be thought not quite up to the mark in a man of business."

In such cases, may I ask, which standard is entitled to take the precedence?

"No doubt each is good in its place; but you can't mix up business and religion."

You are quite right, my friend. You mean that

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the attempts now made to harmonize present and final salvation with most kinds of business, or with any business as most generally conducted, are and must needs be abortive. The gate is as strait, and the way as narrow, for the child of God to-day, as at any former time. It must be frankly and fearlessly avowed, that the occupations which to-day permit the man of average ability to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and at the same time acquire an ample livelihood, are far from numerous. And as for *wealth*, no child of God can reasonably reckon the acquisition of *that*, his call from God. They "who *will* be rich," go where no child of God can follow.

"Do you mean to assert that wealth must henceforth be confined to the wicked?"

I mean to assert that the majority of our "church members in good and regular standing," have been betrayed into modes of life inharmonious with the aspirations for holy living which we may hope come to them in their more thoughtful moments.

Little by little, and doubtless all unconsciously, step by step, they have been tempted to forget that gain is not godliness, and that a goodly estate is no satisfactory substitute for the smile of their Lord. Even our good brethren in the ministry have sometimes been tempted to overestimate the desirableness of well-to-do church members. No, dear brethren! However necessary money may be for Christian purposes, the one want of our times is, men filled

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with faith and the Holy Ghost; men who dare entreat that Christ may be formed in them at any cost; men who dare venture wholly on the command and promise, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." It is for the lack of this Christian bravery, in part at least, that the present business depression has come upon us. No doubt much might be truly affirmed of over-production, over-trading, and lavish expenditure, as procuring causes: and yet more might be truly said, of the various influence of the greed of gold; but over and above all this let us think of the law of Jesus, restraining and constraining us to ask to be "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that we may walk worthy of our Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and filled with the knowledge of God." When this becomes our controlling desire and prayer the sons of God will not lack any good thing. If they can find no way to earn the money the church of Christ is supposed to need, our God will supply all the need from His inexhaustible stores.

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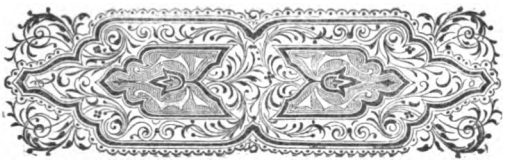

XXXII.

A PROTEST AGAINST A BUGBEAR.

IT is written, "We are not ignorant of Satan's devices." A servant of our Lord said this, one who was taught of God. But not all of the servants of the Lord can affirm so much. I propose to show that one of Satan's devices is so adroitly covered as to deceive many who are otherwise both well-informed and abundantly competent. The bugbear with which we have now to do, expresses itself substantially thus: To speak of your own personal experiences is egotism; egotism is always offensive; therefore, if you would avoid the just condemnation of God and man, you must very seldom, if ever, mention a manifestation of the grace of God to men, in which *you* have had any participation.

This persuasion cometh not of Him who called you to glory and vigorous efficiency. An enemy hath done this. Behold the evidence. The man out of whom Jesus cast many devils besought Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to thine own house, and *show how*

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great things God hath done unto thee." The men whom Jesus selected to preach the Gospel to every creature had neither philosophy, theology, nor science of any kind. It was, therefore, utterly beyond their power to present truth in the abstract. Even John, the beloved disciple, was enforced to say, "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life, declare we unto you." Peter and John declared to the rulers, elders, scribes, and high priest, that the good deed done by them to the impotent man was by the name of Jesus Christ. Our Lord has said, "Ye are my witnesses." It is required of witnesses to tell what they themselves have witnessed, seen and known. Christian witnesses in our day have not seen the incarnate Christ; they have known and do know God in Christ; they know also the Comforter in their own souls; and their testimony must needs be of what they have verified in their own experience, for it is thus we see and know "the invisible things of God." And to close the mouth of one who would tell what God has done *in and through him*, because it has been so done, is to silence God's witnesses, under the specious but false pretext that what you and I have participated in cannot be told to the praise and glory of God, because it is egotistical, and so sinful. To give in to this falsehood is to strangle our prayer and conference meetings. Abstract statements of truth beget abstract prayers. Said Rev. John Angell James,

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"If I have had any considerable usefulness with my people it has arisen very much out of my habit of showing them my heart; of sharing with them my joys and sorrows in all the many and various chances and changes in life. It is thus our Lord has disclosed to us in the Gospel, and in all the Holy Scriptures, his experience in life, and the consolation of His Father and of the Holy Spirit. It is thus he demands of us that, in bearing one another's burdens, we comfort them with the very comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. Is it not the united testimony of the people of God that Jesus has met and manifested himself to them peculiarly and most fully when they have been trying to help, guide and comfort others? It is when they state, to the glory and praise of God, what He has enabled them thus to do; nay, rather what He has condescended to do by and through them, that they do most truly honor Him, and most persuasively encourage their fellows to hope in the Lord, and to strive most vigorously to advance His interests in the hearts of men."

Away then with this false and monstrous representation, that we must not mention the ways and walks of usefulness to which God has admitted us. Speaking, within a week, to a prominent and earnest preacher on the duty of the brethren to take up and echo the word of life, he said, "Yes; but when we press the obligation to work for Christ, we are immediately met with the question, 'But what is there for me to do? We have few or no poor in our parish.

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The sick and the afflicted are visited by the minister; and so there is nothing.'" Wonderful simplicity; but not innocence; for there is never a time when dozens, and scores, ay, hundreds, are not perishing before our very eyes for lack of knowledge; and it is not doctrinal knowledge they lack so much as practical knowledge, the homely experiences of men and women of like passions and like trials with themselves. What they most need to know is what Jesus and the Comforter is doing and will do for those who are struggling with the burdens and the trials of common life to-day; and this they would learn, not from the pulpit, and on the Sabbath, but at every turn in life, from those who, in virtue of a daily and hourly walk with Jesus, are both able, willing and prompt to tell them of the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love and sympathy of Christ, which passeth knowledge. Brethren and sisters, we can never do our full duty, nor enjoy our full privilege in this, until we have obtained grace from our God utterly to repudiate this Satanic bugbear, this false affirmation that we may not properly and profitably tell of God's grace to us in opening many and various ways and means of Christian usefulness. The first disciples found an unegotistical way of giving glory to God for His grace to men through their endeavors, and so may and must we, or we shall forfeit our claim to be called God's witnesses.

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XXXIII.

BUSINESS LIFE ILLUSTRATED IN THAT OF A DRY-GOODS JOBBER.

[You are, it may be, wondering what possible place in such a volume this chapter can have. I will tell you. Some years ago, before the erection of our present post-office, one of our most successful merchants said to me: "You know how utterly ignorant of the toils and cares of the merchant's life, our professional men are. I want you to illuminate their benighted minds with an article in the *Atlantic*. Our lawyers, doctors, and ministers plume themselves with the modest assumption that their occupations are of a higher grade than ours, and that their mental powers and various cultivation entitle them to a place and esteem among men very much above any that could with propriety be awarded to dealers in merchandise.

No one of these "learned professions," as they are often called, has greater need to know the true status of business men than the ministry. You are to preach to them. It is yours to instruct them in the things that pertain to the kingdom of God. Before you can instruct them you must know them, and how and where to take them up. It may chance to some of you to find there is less need to descend than to ascend to their level; and it can scarcely happen to any graduate of the schools, bent on enlarging his area, not to make some valuable acquisitions in this field of investigation. On the other hand you are to be alive to the peculiar temptations of these active spirits; to keep in mind the inspired warnings; *e. g.*, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they

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have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." Beware how you encourage men to get rich, "because much money is needed for Christian purposes." Do what you can to save the few who seem to be predestined to this most undesirable distinction; warn them against the hurtful assumption and presumption that gain is godliness, or that they are in any degree better for being rich; but rather make them comprehend the great danger that riches will corrupt and degrade them. Poverty may enforce humility, purity and gentle courtesy: "The poor useth entreaties; but the rich answereth roughly." "Do not rich men oppress you? Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?" It would be a miracle if riches did not beguile a man into thinking of himself more highly than he ought to think, because the overestimate of wealth being well-nigh universal, the race combine, — I had almost said, *conspire*, in their deference and worship, to befool the rich. True wealth can be only in what a man *is*, not in what he *has*. There is a mausoleum on Fifth Avenue, New York, on which might well be inscribed, — "Stop, traveller, and consider this cenotaph. Where he lies, for whom this monument was built, cannot be told. Its foundations should be deep, for the reasonable hopes of millions lie beneath. The insatiable cravings of a not too thoughtful one engulfed them all. All that made man in the image of his Maker, — noble, benign, beneficent, and hopeful of the beatific, — went down with them, and like the baseless fabric of a vision not a wreck remains behind. Consider what I tell thee and be warned in time. You can do no business wisely or well, that you do not leaven with holiness to the Lord and kindliness to your fellow-men. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."]

WHAT is a dry-goods jobber? No wonder you ask. You have been hunting, perhaps, for our peripatetic post-office, and have stumbled upon Summer Street and Devonshire Street and Franklin Street. You are almost ready to believe in the lamp of Aladdin, that could build palaces in a night. Looking up to the stately and costly structures which

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have usurped the place of once-familiar dwellings, and learning that they are, for the most part, tenanted by dry-goods jobbers, you feel, that, for such huge results, there must needs be an adequate cause; and so you ask, "What is a dry-goods jobber?"

It is more than a curious question. For parents desirous of finding their true sphere for promising and for unpromising sons, it is eminently a practical question. It is a question comprehensive of dollars and cents; also of bones and sinews; of muscles, nerves, and brains; of headache, heartache, and the cyclopædia of being, doing, and enduring. An adequate answer to such a question must needs ask your indulgence; for it cannot be condensed into a very few words.

A dry-goods jobber is a wholesale buyer and seller, for cash or for approved credit, of all manner of goods, wares, and materials, large and small, coarse and fine, foreign and domestic, which pertain to the clothing, convenience, and garnishing, by night and by day, of men, women, and children, from a button to a blanket, from a calico to a carpet, from stockings to a head-dress, from an inside-handkerchief to a waterproof, from a piece of tape to a thousand bales of shirting; not forgetting linen, silk, or woollen fabrics, for drapery or upholstery, for bed or table, including hundreds of items which time would fail me to recite. All these the dry-goods jobber provides for his customer, the retailer, who, in his turn, will dispense them to the consumer.

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A really competent and successful dry-goods jobber in our day is a new creation. He is begotten of the times. Of him, as truly as of the poet, and with yet more emphasis, it must be said, "He is born, not made." He is a poet, a philosopher, an artist, an engineer, a military commander, an advocate, an attorney, a financier, a steam-engine, a telegraph-operator, a servant-of-all-work, a Job, a Hercules, and a Bonaparte, rolled into one.

"Exaggeration," do you say? Not at all. You asked for information? You shall have it to your heart's content.

To a youth, for a time interrupted in his preparation for college, I said, —

"Never mind: this falls in exactly with my well-considered plan. You shall go into a dry-goods store till your eyes recover strength; it will be the best year's schooling of your life."

"How so?" was the dubious answer. "What can I learn there?"

"Learn? Everything, common sense included, which is generally excluded from the university curriculum; for example, time, place, quantity, and the worth of each. You shall learn length, breadth, and thickness; hard and soft; pieces and yards; dozens and the fractions thereof; order and confusion, cleanliness and dirt (to love the one, and hate the other); materials, colors, and shades of color; patience, manners, decency in general; system and method, and the relation these sustain to indepen-

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dence; in short, that there is a vast deal more out of books than in books; and, finally, that the man who knows only what is in books is generally a lump of conceit, and of about as much weight in the scales of actual life as the ashes of the Alexandrian Library, or the worms in any parchments that may have survived that conflagration."

"Whew!" was his ejaculation: "I didn't know there was so much."

"I dare say not. Most of your limited days have passed under the training of men who are in the like predicament; whose notion of the chief end of man is to convert lively boys into thick dictionaries, and who honestly believe that the chief want of the age is your walking dictionary. Any other type of humanity, they tell us, 'won't pay.' Much they know of what will and what won't pay! This comes of partial education, — of one-sided, of warped and biassed education. It puts one out of patience, this arrogance of the university, this presuming upon the ignorance of the million, this assertion of an indispensable necessity to make the boy of the nineteenth century a mere expert in some subdivision of one of the sciences. The obstinacy of an hereditary absolutism, which the world has outgrown, still lingers in our schools of learning. Let us admit the Divine right of Science, admit the fitness of a limited number of our youth to become high priests in her temple, but no Divine right of fossil interpreters of Science to compel the entire generation to disem-

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bowel their sons, and make of these living temples mere receptacles of Roman, Grecian, or Egyptian relics. We don't believe that "mummy is medicinal," the Arabian Doctor Haly to the contrary notwithstanding. If it ever was, its day has gone by. Therefore, let all sensible people pray for a Cromwell, — not to pull down university science, but to set up the commonwealth of common sense; to subordinate the former to the latter; and to proclaim an education for our own age, and for its exigencies. Your dry-goods jobber stands in violent contrast to your university man in the matter of practical adaptation. His knowledge is no affair of dried specimens, but every particle of it a living knowledge, ready, at a moment's warning, for all or any of the demands of life."

You are, perhaps, thinking, "Yes, that is supposable, because the lessons learned by the jobber are limited to the common affairs of daily life, are not prospective; because, belonging only to the passing day, they are easily surveyed on all sides, and their full use realized at once; in short, a mere matter of buying and selling goods, a very inferior thing as compared with the dignified and scholarly labors of the student."

How mistaken this estimate is, will appear as we advance to something like a comprehensive survey of the dry-goods jobber's sphere.

First, then, he is a buyer of all manner of goods, wares, and materials, proper to his department in

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commerce. He is minutely informed in the history of raw materials. He knows the countries from which they come; the adaptation of soils and climates to their raising; the skill of the cultivators; the shipping usages; the effect of transportation, by land and sea, on raw materials and on manufactured articles, with all the mysteries of insurance allowances and usages, the debentures on exportation, and the duties on importation, in his own and in other lands. His forecast is taxed to the utmost as to what may be the condition of his own market six, twelve, or eighteen months from the time of ordering goods; both as to the quantity which may be in market, and as to the fashion, which is always changing; and also as to the condition of his customers to pay for goods, which will often depend upon the fertility of the season. As respects home-purchases, he is compelled to learn, or to suffer for the want of knowing, that the difference between being a skilful, pleasant buyer, and the opposite, is a profit or loss of from five to seven and a half or ten per cent, or, in other words, the difference, oftentimes, between success and ruin, between comfort and discomfort, between being a welcome and a hated visitor, between being honored as an able merchant and contemned as a mean man or an unmitigated bore.

Is your curiosity piqued to know wherein buyers thus contrasted may differ? They differ endlessly, like the faces you meet on the street. Thus one man is born to an open, frank, friendly, and cour-

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teous manner; another is cold, reserved, and suspicious. One is prompt, hilarious, and provocative of every good feeling, whenever you chance to meet; the other is slow, morose, and fit to waken every dormant antipathy in your soul. An able buyer is, or becomes, observing to the last degree. He knows the slightest differences in quality and in style, and possesses an almost unerring taste; knows the condition of the market; knows every holder of the article he wants, and the lowest price of each. He knows the peculiarities of the seller, — his strong points and his weak points, his wisdom and his foibles, his very temperament, and how it is acted upon by his dinner, or the want of it. He knows the estimate put upon his own note by that seller. He knows what his note will sell for in the street. He knows, to a feather's weight, the influence of each of these items upon the mind of the seller of whom he wishes to make a purchase. Talk about diplomacy! — there 's not a man in any court in Europe who knows his position, his fulcrum and his lever, and the use he can make of them, as this man knows. He can unravel any combination, penetrate any disguise, surmount any obstacle. Beyond all other men, he knows when to talk, and when to refrain from talking; how to throw the burden of negotiation on the seller; how to get the goods he wants at his own price, not at *his* asking, but on the *suggestion of the seller*, prompted by his own politely obvious unwillingness to have the seller part with his mer-

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chandise at any price not entirely acceptable to himself.

The incompetent man, on the other hand, is presuming, exacting, and unfeeling. He not only desires, but asserts the desire in the very teeth of the seller, to have something which that seller has predetermined he shall not have. He fights a losing game from the start. He will probably begin by depreciating the goods which he knows, or should know, that the seller has reason to hold in high esteem. He will be likely enough to compare them to some other goods which he knows to be inferior. He will thus arouse a feeling of dislike, if not of anger, where his interest should teach him to conciliate and soothe; and, if he sometimes carry his point, his very victory is, in effect, a defeat, since it procures him an increased antipathy. This the judicious buyer never does. He repudiates as a mere half-truth and a relic of barbarism, the maxim, "There is no friendship in trade."

"But," you are asking, "do only those succeed who are born to these extraordinary endowments? And those who do succeed, are they, in fact, each and all of them, such wonderfully capable men as you have described?"

If by success you mean mere money-making, it is not to be denied that some men do that by an instinct, little, if at all, superior to that of the dog who smells out a bone. There are exceptions to all rules; and there are chances in all games, even in

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games of skill. Lord Timothy Dexter, as he is facetiously called, shipped warming-pans to the West Indies, in defiance of all geographical objections to the venture, and made money by the shipment, — not because warming-pans were wanted there, but because the natives mistook, and used them for molasses-ladles. It must be owned, that a portion of the successful ones are *lucky;* that a portion of them use the blunt weapon of an indomitable will as an efficient substitute for the finer edge of that nice tact and good manners which they lack. Their very rudeness seems to commend them to the rude natures which confound refinement with trickery, and assume that brutality must needs be honest.

But there are other things to be said of buying. The dry-goods jobber frequents the auction-room. If you have never seen a large sale of dry-goods at auction, you have missed one of the remarkable incidents of our day. You are not yet aware of how much an auctioneer and two or three hundred jobbers can do and endure in the short space of three hours. You must know that fifty or a hundred thousand dollars' worth of goods may easily change owners in that time. You are not to dream of the leisurely way of disposing of somebody's household-furniture or library, which characterizes the doings of one or two of our fellow-citizens who manage such matters within speaking distance of King's Chapel, but are rather to picture to yourself a congregation of three hundred of the promptest men in our Atlantic cities,

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with a sprinkling of Westerners quite as wide awake for bargains, each of them having marked his catalogue; an auctioneer who considers the sale of a hundred lots an hour his proper *rôle*, and who is able to see the lip, eye, or finger of the man whose note he covets, in spite of all sounds, signs, or opaque bodies. The man of unquiet nerves or of exacting lungs would do well to leave that arena to the hard heads and cool bloods who can pursue their aim, and secure their interests, undisturbed either by the fractional rat-a-tat-tat of the auctioneer's "Twenty-seven af — naf — naf — naf, — who 'll give me thirty?" or by the banter and comicalities which a humor-loving auctioneer will interject between these bird-notes, without changing his key, or arresting his sale a moment. If you would see the evidence of comprehensive and minute knowledge, of good taste, quick wit, sound judgment, and electrical decision, attend an auction-sale in New York some morning. There will be no lack of fun to season the solemnity of business, nor of the mixture of courtesy and selfishness usual in every gathering, whether for philanthropic, scientific, or commercial purposes. Many dry-goods jobbers will attend the sale with no intention of buying, but simply to note the prices obtained, and having traced the goods to their owners, to get the same in better order, and on better terms; the commission paid to the auctioneer being divided, or wholly conceded by the seller to the buyer, according to his estimate of the note.

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A dry-goods buyer will sometimes spend a month in New York, the first third, or half of which he will devote to ascertaining what goods are in the market, and what are to arrive; also to learning the mood of the English, French, and Germans, who hold the largest stocks. Sometimes these gentlemen will make an early trial of their goods at auction. Unsatisfactory results will rouse their phlegm or fire; and they declare they will not send another piece of goods to auction, come what may. For local or temporary reasons, buyers sometimes persist in holding back till the season is so far advanced, that the foreign gentlemen become alarmed. Their credits in London, Paris, and Amsterdam, are running out; they are anxious to make remittances; and then ensues one of those dry-goods panics so characteristic of New York and its mixed multitude. An avalanche of goods descends upon the auction-rooms, and prices drop ten, twenty, forty per cent it may be; and the unlucky or short-sighted men who made early purchases are in desperate haste to run off their stocks before the market is irreparably broken down. Whether, therefore, to buy early or late, in large or in small quantities, at home or abroad, are questions beset with difficulty. He who imports largely may land his goods in a bare market, and reap a golden harvest, or in a market so glutted with goods, that the large sums he counts out to pay the duties may be but a fraction of the loss he knows to be inevitable.

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In addition to the problems belonging to time and place of purchasing, to quantities and prices, there is a host of other problems begotten of styles, of colors, of assortments, of texture and finish, of adaptation to one market or another. The profit on a case of goods is often sacrificed by the introduction or omission of one color or figure, the presence or absence of which makes the merchandise desirable or undesirable. Little less than omniscience will suffice to guard against the sometimes sudden, and often most unaccountable freaks of fashion, whose fiat may doom a thing, in every respect admirably adapted to its intended use, to irretrievable condemnation and loss of value. And when you remember that the purchases of dry-goods must be made in very large quantities, from a month, to six or even twelve months, before the buyer can sell them; and that his sales are many times larger than his capital, and most of them on long credit, — you have before you a combination of exigencies hardly to be paralleled elsewhere.

The crisis of 1857 brought a general collapse. Scores and scores of jobbers failed; very few dared to buy goods. Mills were compelled to run on short time, or to cease altogether. The country became bare of the common necessaries of life. In process of time, trade rallied, manufacturing recommenced, orders for goods poured in; and for a twelve month, and more, the manufacturer had it all his own way. His goods are all sold ahead, — months ahead of his

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ability to manufacture. He makes his own price, and chooses his customer. This operates not unkindly on the jobbers who are wealthy and independent; but, for those who have but lately begun to mount the hill of difficulty, it offers one more impediment; for, to men who have a great many goods to sell, it is a matter of moment to secure the customers who can buy in large quantities, and whose notes will bring the money of banks or private capitalists as soon as offered. Against such buyers, men of limited means and of only average business ability, have but a poor chance. There will always be some articles of merchandise in the buying or selling of which they cannot compete.

When a financial crisis overtakes the community, we hear much and sharp censure of all *speculation*. Speculators, one and all, are forthwith consigned to an abyss of obloquy. The virtuous public outside of trade washes its hands of all participation in the iniquity. This same virtuous public knows very little of what it is talking about. What is speculation? Shall we say, in brief and in general, that it consists in running risks, in taking extra-hazardous risks, on the chance of making unusually large profits? Is it that men have abandoned the careful ways of the fathers, and do not confine themselves to small stores, small stocks, and cash transactions? And do you know who it is that has compelled this change? That same public who denounce speculation in one breath, and in the next clamor for goods

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at low prices, and force the jobber into large stores, and large sales at small profits, as the indispensable condition of his very existence.

Those who thus rail at speculation are generally quite unaware that their own inexorable demand for goods at low prices is one of the principal efficient causes of that of which they complain. They do not know that the capacious maw of the insatiable public is yearly filled with millions on millions of shirtings and sheetings, and other articles of prime necessity, without one farthing of profit to the jobber. The outside world reason from the assumption that the jobber might, but will not, avoid taking considerable risks. They do not consider, for they do not know, how entirely all is changed from the days and circumstances in which a very small business would suffice to maintain the merchant. They do not consider that an immense amount of goods being, of compulsion, sold without profit, a yet other huge amount must be so sold as to compensate for this. Nor do they consider that the possibility of doing this is often contingent upon the buyer's carefully calculated probability of a rise in the article he is purchasing. Many a time is the jobber enabled and inclined to purchase largely only by the assurance, that, from the time of his purchase, the price will be advanced.

The *selling* of dry-goods is another department in high art about which the ignorance of outsiders is ineffable. I was once asked, in the way of courtesy

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and good neighborhood, to call on a clergyman in our vicinity; which I did. Desirous of doing his part in the matter of good fellowship and smooth conversation, he began thus: —

"Well, now, Mr. Smith, you know all about business. I suppose, if I were to go into a store to buy goods, nineteen men out of twenty would cheat me if they could; would n't they?"

"No, sir," I answered, with a swelling of indignation at the injustice, a mingling of pity for the ignorance, and a foreboding of small benefit from the preaching of a minister of the Gospel, who knew so little of the world he lived in, — "no, sir; nineteen men in twenty would not cheat you, if they could, for the surest of all reasons, — it would be dead against their own interest."

Not a day passes but the question is asked by our youths who are being initiated in the routine of selling goods, "Is this honest? Is that honest? Is it honest to mark your goods as costing more than they do cost? Is it honest to ask one man more than you ask another? Ought not the same price to be named to every buyer? Is n't it cheating to get twenty-five per cent profit? Can a man sell goods without lying? Are men compelled to lie and cheat a little in order to earn an honest living?"

What is the reason that these questions will keep coming up? that they can no more be laid than Banquo's ghost? Here are some of the reasons. First and foremost, multitudes of young men, whose

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parents followed the plough, the loom, or the anvil, have taken into their heads that they will neither dig, hammer, nor ply the shuttle. To soil their hands with manual labor they cannot abide. The sphere of commerce looks, to their longing eyes, a better thing than lying down in green pastures, or than a peaceful life beside still waters, procured by laborious farming, or by any mechanical pursuit. Clean linen and stylish apparel are inseparably associated in their minds with an easy and elegant life; and so they pour into our cities; and the ranks of the merchants are filled and over-filled many times. Once, the merchant had only to procure an inviting stock, and his goods sold themselves. He did not go after customers; they came to him; and it was a matter of favor to them to supply their wants. Now all that is changed. There are many more merchants than are needed. Buyers are in request; and buyers whose credit is the best, to a very great extent, dictate the prices at which they will buy. The question is no longer, How large a profit can I get? but, How small a profit shall I accept? The competition for customers is so fierce, that the seller hardly dares ask any profit, for fear his more anxious neighbor will undersell him. In order to attract customers, one thing after another has been made "a leading article," a bait to be offered at cost, or even less than cost, — that being oftentimes the condition on which alone the purchaser will make a beginning of buying.

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"Jenkins," cried an anxious seller, "you don't buy anything of me; and I can sell you as cheap as any. Here 's a bale of sheetings, now, at eight cents, will do you good."

"How many have you got?"

"Oh, plenty!"

"Well, how many?"

"Fifteen bales."

"Well, I 'll take them."

"Come in, and buy something more."

"No: nothing more to-day."

Here was a loss of seventy-five dollars to the seller; and yet his customer did not dare buy other goods.

It will be obvious that the selling a part of one's goods at less than cost enhances the necessity of getting a profit on the rest. But how to do this, under the sharp scrutiny of a buyer who knows that his own success, not to say his very existence, depends upon his paying no profit possible to be avoided, — no profit, at all events, not certainly paid by some sharp neighbor, who is competing with him for the same trade.

"But is there anything in all this," you are asking, "to preclude the jobber's telling the truth?" — "Nothing."—"Anything to preclude strict honesty?" — "Nothing." — "Why, then, do the questions you have quoted continually recur?"

I answer: In order to get his share of the best custom in his line, the dry-goods jobber has taken a

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store in the best position in town, at a rent of from three to fifty thousand dollars a year; has hired men and boys at all prices, from fifty dollars to five thousand, and enough of these to result, in an aggregate, of from five to fifty thousand dollars a year for help, without which his business cannot be done. Add to this the usual average for store expenses of every name, and for the family expenses of two, five, or seven partners, and you find a dry-goods firm under the necessity of getting out of their year's sales somewhere from fifteen to a hundred and fifty thousand dollars' profit before they shall have saved one cent to meet the losses of an unfavorable season.

Now, though there is nothing even in all these urgencies to justify a single lie or fraud, there is much to sharpen a man's wits to secure the sale of his goods; much to educate him in all manner of expedients to baffle the inquiries of customers who would be offended if they could discover that he ever charged them the profit without which he could never meet his expenses. And the jobber's problem is complicated by the folly, universally prevalent among buyers, of expecting some partiality, or peculiarity of favor over their neighbors, who are just as good as themselves. Every dry-goods jobber knows that his customer's foolish hope and expectation often demand three absurdities of him, — first, the assurance that he has the advantage over all other jobbers in a better stock of goods, better bought; secondly, that he has a peculiar friendship for himself; and, thirdly,

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that, though of other men he must needs get a profit, in his special instance he shall ask little or none; and that, such is his regard for him, it is a matter of no moment whether he live in Lowell or Louisiana, in New Bedford or Nebraska, or whether he pay New England bank-notes within thirty days, or wild-cat money and wild-lands, which may be converted into cash, with more or less expense and loss, somewhere between nine months and nine and twenty years.

And yet the uninitiated "can't understand how an honest merchant can have two prices for the same goods." An honest man has but one price for the same goods; and that is the cash price. All outside of that is barter, — goods for notes. His first inquiry is "What is the market value of the note offered?" True, he knows that many of the notes he takes cannot be sold at all; but he also knows, that the notes he is willing to take will, in the aggregate, be guaranteed by a reservation of one, two, or three per cent, and that the note of the particular applicant for credit will tend to swell or diminish the rate; and he cannot afford to exchange his goods for any note, except at a profit which will guaranty its payment when due, which, in other words, will make the note equal in value to cash.

Now, it is just because all business-contingencies cannot be worked into an unvarying form as regular as the multiplication-table, and as plain to the apprehension of all men, that a vast amount of lying and

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of dishonesty is imputed where it does not exist. Merchants are much like other men, — wise and unwise, far-sighted and short-sighted, selfish and unselfish, honest and dishonest. But that they are, as a class, more dishonest than other men, is so far from being true, that I much doubt if we should overstrain the matter if we should affirm that they are the most honest class of men in the community. There is much in their training which contributes directly, and most efficiently, to this result. Their very first lessons are in feet and inches, in pounds and ounces, in exact calculations, in accounts and balances. Carelessness, mistakes, inaccuracies, they are made to understand, are unpardonable sins. The boy who goes into a store learns, for the first time, that half a cent, a quarter of a cent, an eighth of a cent, may be a matter of the gravest import. He finds a thorough bookkeeper absolutely refusing himself rest till he has detected an error of ten cents in a business of six months; and every day's experience enforces the lesson. It is giving what is due, and claiming what is due, from year's end to year's end. Among merchants, it is matter of common notoriety, that the prompt and exact adherence to orders insisted on by merchants, and prompt advice of receipt of business and of progress, cannot be expected from our worthy brethren at the bar. (The few honorable exceptions are respectfully informed that they are not referred to.) We do not expect them to weigh or measure the needless annoyance to which they often subject

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us, because they have never been, like ourselves, trained to the use of weights and measures; and therefore we are not willing to stigmatize them as dishonest, though they do, in fact, often steal our time and strength and patience by withholding an answer to a business letter.

None but those who are in the business know the assiduous attention with which the dry-goods jobber follows up his customers. None but they know the urgent necessity of doing this. The jobber may have travelled a thousand miles to make his customer's acquaintance, and to prevail upon him to come to Boston to make his purchases; and some neighbor, who boards at the hotel he happens to make his resting-place, lights upon him, shows him attention, tempts him with bargains not to be refused, prevails upon him to make the bulk of his purchases of him, before his first acquaintance even hears of his arrival. To guard against disappointments such as this, the jobber sends his salesmen to live at hotels, haunts the hotels himself, studies the hotel-register far more assiduously than he can study his own comfort, or the comfort of his wife and children. Of one such jobber it was said facetiously, "He goes the round of all the hotels every morning with a lantern, to wake up his customers." I had an errand one day at noon to such a devotee. Inquiring for him in the counting-room, I was told by his book-keeper to follow the stairs to the top of the store, and I should find him. I mounted flight after flight to the attic;

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and there I found, not only the man, but also one or two of his customers, surrounding a huge packing-case, upon which they had extemporized a dinner, — cold turkey and tongue, and other edibles, taken standing, with plenty of fun for a dessert. The next time we happened to meet, I said, "So you take not only time, but also customers, by the forelock."

"Yes, to be sure!" was his answer. "Let 'em go to their hotel to dinner in the middle of a bill, and somebody lights upon 'em, and carries 'em off to buy elsewhere; or they begin to remember that it is a long way home, feel homesick, slip off to New York as being so far on the way, and that 's the last you see of 'em. No: we're bound to see 'em through, and no let-up till they've bought all they've got on their memorandum."

We have not yet touched the question of credit. To whom shall the jobber sell his goods? It is the question of questions. Many a man who has bought well; who, in other respects, has sold well; who possessed all the characteristics which recommend a man to the confidence and to the good-will of his fellows, — has made shipwreck of his fortunes because of his inability to meet this question. He sold his goods to men who never paid him. To say that in this the most successful jobbers are governed by an instinct, by an intuitive conviction, which is superior to all rules of judgment, would be to allege what it would be difficult to prove. It would be less difficult to maintain that every competent merchant, how-

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ever unconscious of the fact, has a standard of judgment by which he tries each applicant for credit. There are characteristics of men who can safely be credited, entirely familiar to his thoughts. He looks upon the man, and instantly feels that he is, or is not, the man for him. He thinks his decision an instinct, or an intuition, because, through much practice, these mental operations have become so rapid as to defy analysis. Not being infallible, he sometimes mistakes; and, when he so mistakes, he will be sure to say, "I made that loss because I relied too much upon this characteristic, or because I did not allow its proper weight to the absence of some other; because I thought his shrewdness or his honesty, his enterprise or his economy, would save him;" implying that he had observed some non-conformity to his standard, but had relied upon some excellency in excess to make up for it.

What are the perplexities which beset the question, "To whom shall the jobber sell his goods?" They are manifold: and some of them are peculiar to our country. Our territory is very extensive; our population very heterogeneous; the economy and close calculation which recommend a man in Massachusetts may discredit him in Louisiana. The very countenance is often a sure indication of character and of capacity, when it is one of a class and a region whose pecularities we thoroughly understand; but, coming to us from other classes and regions, we are often at fault, — more especially in these latter

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days, when all strong-mindedness is presumed to be foreshadowed in a stiff beard. Time was, when something could be inferred from a lip, a mouth, a chin; when character could be found in the contour and color of a cheek; but that time has passed. The time was, when, among a homogeneous people, a few time-honored characteristics were both relied on and insisted on; for example, good parentage, good moral character, a thorough training, and superior capacity, joined to industry, economy, sound judgment, and good manners; but Young America has learned to make light of some of these, and to dispense altogether with others of them.

Once, the buyer was required to prove himself an honest, worthy, and capable man. If he wanted credit, he must humbly sue for it, and prove himself deserving of it; and no man thought of applying for it who was not prepared to furnish irrefragable evidence. Once, a reference to some respectable acquaintance would serve the purpose; and neighbors held themselves bound to tell all they knew. The increase of merchants, and fierce competition for customers, have changed this. Men now regard their knowledge of other men as a part of their capital or stock-in-trade. Their knowledge has been acquired at much cost of labor and money; and they hold themselves absolved from all obligation to give away what they have thus expensively acquired. Moreover, their confidence has sometimes been betrayed, and their free communications have been remorse-

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lessly used to their disadvantage. Alas, it cannot be denied that even dry-goods jobbers, with all their extraordinary endowments, are not quite perfect; for some of them will "state the thing that is not," and others "convey" their neighbor's property into their own coffers, — men who prefer gain to godliness, and mistake much money for respectability.

There are very few men, in certain sections of the country, who will absolutely refuse to give a letter of introduction to a neighbor on the simple ground of ill-desert. Men dread the ill-will of their neighbor, and particularly the ill-will of an unscrupulous neighbor; so, when such a neighbor asks a letter, they give it. I remember such a one bringing a dozen or more letters, some of which contained the highest commendation. The writer of one of these letters sent a private note, through the mail, warning one of the persons addressed against the bearer of his own commendatory letter. Those who had no warning sold, and lost. It would be difficult to find a man, however unworthy, who could not, from some quarter, obtain a very respectable letter of introduction. One of the greatest rogues that ever came to Boston brought letters from two of the foremost houses in New York to two firms second to none in Boston. Neither of these gentlemen was in fault in the matter; the train had been laid by some obliging cousin in a banking-house in London.

In making up our account of the difficulties with which a dry-goods jobber has to deal in conducting a

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successful business, it must be distinctly stated, that on no man can he count for information, which will, however remotely or slightly, compromise the interest of the one inquired of. Never, perhaps, was it so true as now, that "the seller has need of a hundred eyes." The competent jobber uses his eyes, first of all, upon the person of the man who desires to buy of him. He questions him about himself, with such directness or indirectness as instinct and experience dictate. He learns to discriminate between the sensitiveness of the high-toned honest man and the sensitiveness of the rogue. Many men of each class are inclined to resent and resist the catechism. Strange as it may seem, the very men who would inexorably refuse a credit to those who should decline to answer their inquiries are the men most inclined to resent any inquiry about themselves. While they demand the fullest and most particular information from their customers, they wonder that others will not take them on their own estimate of themselves.

The jobber next directs his attention to the buyer's knowledge of goods, — of their quality, their style, their worth in market, and their fitness for his own market; all of which will come to light, as he offers to his notice the various articles he has for sale. He will improve the opportunity to draw him out in general conversation, so guiding it as to touch many points of importance, and yet not so as to betray a want of confidence. He sounds him as to his know-

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ledge of other merchants at home and in the city; takes the names of his references, — of several, if he can get them, — puts himself in communication with men who know him, both at his home and in the city. If he can harmonize the information derived from all these sources into a consistent and satisfactory whole, he will then do his utmost to secure his customer, both by selling him his goods at a profit so small that he need have little fear of any neighbor's underselling him, and also by granting every possible accommodation as to the time and manner of payment.

A moderately-thoughtful man will by this time begin to think the elements of toil and of perplexity already suggested sufficient for the time and strength of any man, and more than he would wish to undertake. But experience alone could teach him in how many ways indulged customers can and do manage to make the profit they pay so small, and the toil and vexation they occasion so great, that the jobber is often put upon weighing the question, Should I not be richer without them? Thus, for example, some of them will affect to doubt that the jobber wishes to sell to them, and propose, as a test, that he shall let them have some choice article at the cost, or at less than the cost, — now on one pretext, and now on another, — intimating an indisposition to buy, if they cannot be indulged in that one thing. If they carry their point, that exceptional price is thenceforth claimed as the rule. Another day, the

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concession will be asked on something else; and, by extending this game so as to include a number of jobbers, these shrewd buyers will manage to lay in an assorted stock on which there will have been little or no profit to the sellers. To cap the climax of vexation, these persons will very probably come in, after not many days, and propose to cash their notes at double interest off. Only an official of the Inquisition could turn the thumb-screw so many times, and so remorselessly.

But we have yet to consider the collection of debts. The jobber who has not capital so ample as to buy only for cash is expected invariably to settle his purchases by giving his note, payable at bank, on a fixed day. He pays it when due, or fails. Not so with his customers; multitudes of them shrink from giving a note payable at bank; and some altogether refuse to do so. They wish to buy on open account, or to give a note to be paid at maturity, if convenient; otherwise not. The number of really prompt and punctual men, as compared with those who are otherwise, is very small. The number of those who never fail is smaller still. The collection-laws are completely alike, probably, in no two States. Some of them appear to have been constructed for the accommodation, not of honest creditors, but of dishonest debtors. In others, they are such as to put each jobber in fear of every other; a first attachment taking all the property, if the debt be large enough, leaving little or nothing, usually, for those

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who have been willing to give the debtor such indulgence as might enable him to pay in full, were it granted by all his creditors.

No jobber can open his letters in the morning in the certainty of finding no tidings of a failure. No jobber, leaving his breakfast-table, can assure his wife and children, sick or well, that he will dine or sup with them: any one of a dozen railroad trains may, for aught he knows, be sweeping him away to some remote point to battle with the mischances of trade, the misfortunes of honest men, or the knavery of rogues, and the meshes of the law. Once in the cars, he casts his eye around in uneasy expectation of finding some one or more of his neighbors bound on the same errand. While yet peering over the seats in front of him, he is unpleasantly startled by a slap on the shoulder, and, "Ah, John! bound East? What's in the wind? Any ducks in these days?" — "Why, — yes, — no, — that is, I 'm going down along, — little uncertain how far, — depends on circumstances." — "So, so, — I see, — mum's the word." Well, neither is quite ready to trust the other, neither quite ready to know the worst: so long as a blow is suspended, it may not fall; and so, with desperate exertions, they change the subject, converse on things indifferent, or subside into more or less moody meditations upon their respective chances and prospects.

Any jobber who has seen service will tell you stories without number of these vexatious experi-

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ences, sometimes dashed with the comical in no common measure. He will tell you of how they arrived at the last town on the railroad, some six or seven of them; of how not a word had been lisped of their destination; of the stampede from the railroad-station to the tavern; of the spirited bids for horses and wagons; of the chopfallen disappointment of the man for whom no vehicle remained; of his steeple-chase a-bare-back; and of their various successes with writs and officers, in their rush for the store of the delinquent debtors. Of three such Jehus, the story goes, that, two of them having bought the monopoly of the inside of the only vehicle, and in so doing, as they thought, having utterly precluded any chance for the third, their dauntless competitor instantly mounted with the driver, commenced negotiations for the horse, which speedily resulted in a purchase, and thereupon detached the horse from the vehicle, drove on, and effected a first attachment, which secured his debt.

The occurrence of "a bad year" compels many a jobber to abandon his store and home for one, two, or three months together, and visit his customers, scattered all over the land, to make collections. Then it is that the power of persuasion, if possessed, is brought into efficient use; discrimination, too, is demanded, good judgment, and power of combination; for a debt that cannot be paid in money may possibly be paid partly in money, or in merchandise of some sort, and in part secured: and, among the

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securities offered, to choose those which will involve the least delay is generally no easy matter.

To those who, without experience, are commencing a jobbing business, a capital of thirty, forty, or fifty thousand dollars, seems an inexhaustible fund. Experience teaches, that an incautious and unskilful man may easily bury even the largest of these sums in a single season. If not actually lost, it has, in effect, ceased to be capital, because it cannot be collected; and the notes he has taken are such as will not be discounted.

Success in the jobbing business makes such demand on talent and capacity as outsiders seldom dream of. Half a dozen secretaries of state, with a governor and a president thrown in, would not suffice to constitute a first-class jobbing-firm. The general or special incompetency of these distinguished functionaries in their several spheres may probably be covered by the capacity of their subordinates. The President of these United States — of late years, at all events — is not supposed to be in a position to know whether the will is or is not "a self-determining power." But no jobbing-firm can thus cloak its deficiencies, or shirk its responsibilities. Goods must be bought and sold, and paid for; and a master-spirit in each department, capable of penetrating to every particular, and of controlling every subordinate, cannot be dispensed with. He must know that every man to whom he delegates any portion of his work is competent and trustworthy. He must

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be able to feel that the thing which he deputes to each will be as surely and as faithfully done as though done by his own hand. No criticism is more common or more depreciatory than that "such a one will not succeed, because he has surrounded himself with incompetent men."

It is much to be regretted that it cannot be said, that no man can succeed in the jobbing business who is not a model of courtesy. Unhappily, our community has not yet reached that elevation. But this may with truth be affirmed, — that many a man fails for the want of courtesy, and from the want of that good will to his fellows from which all real courtesy springs. There is small chance for any man to succeed who does not command his own spirit. There is no chance whatever for an indolent man, and, in the long run, little or no chance for the dishonest man. The same must be said for the timid and for the rash man. Nor can we offer any encouragement to the intermittent man. From year's end to year's end, the dry-goods jobber finds himself necessitated to be studying his stock and his ledger. He knows, that, while men sleep, the enemy will be sowing tares. In his case, the flying moments are the enemy, and bad stock and bad debts are the tares. To weed out each of these is his unceasing care. And, as both the one and the other are forever choking the streams of income which should supply the means of paying his own notes, his no less constant care is to provide such other conduits as shall insure him

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always a full basin at the bank. Nobody but a jobber can know the vexation of a jobber who cannot find money to cash his notes when they are beginning to be thrown into the market at a price a shade lower than his neighbor's notes are sold at.

In conclusion, a few material facts should be stated.

As a general proposition, it is not to be denied, that those who are in haste to get rich will find in the dry-goods jobbing business many temptations and snares into which one may easily fall. A young man who is not fortified by a faithful home-training, and by sound religious principle, will be likely enough to degenerate into a heartless money-maker.

While the young man who has been well trained at home, who appreciates good manners, good morals, and good books, will derive immense advantage in acquiring that quick discernment, that intuitive apprehension of the rights and of the pleasure of others, and that nice tact, which characterize the highest style of merchants, he who has not been thus prepared will be more than likely to mistake *brusquerie* for manliness, and brutality for the sublime of independence. As in a great house there are vessels unto honor, and also unto dishonor, so, in the purlieus of the dry-goods trade, there are gentlemen who would honor and adorn any society, and also men whose manners would shame Hottentots; whose language, innocent of all preference for Worcester or Webster, a terror to all decent ideas, like scare-

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crows in cornfields, is dressed in the cast-off garments of the refuse of all classes.

Success in retailing does not necessarily qualify a man to succeed in the dry-goods jobbing business. The game is played on a much larger scale; it includes other chances, and demands other qualifications, natural and acquired. Instances are not wanting of men, who, in the smaller towns, had made to themselves a name, and acquired an honorable independence, sinking both capital and courage in their endeavors to manage the business of a city-jobber.

It should be well remembered, that while it is not indispensable to success in the jobbing business that each partner should be an expert in every department of the business, — in buying, selling, collecting, paying, and book-keeping, — it is absolutely necessary that each should be such in his own department, and that the firm, as a unit, should include a completely competent man for each and every one of these departments. The lack of the qualities which are indispensable to any one of these may, and probably will, prove an abyss deep enough to engulf the largest commercial ship afloat.

Finally, to avoid disappointment, the man who would embark in the dry-goods trade should make up his mind to meet every variety of experience known to mortals, and to be daunted by nothing. He will assuredly find fair winds and head winds, clear skies and cloudy skies, head seas and cross seas, as well as stern seas. A wind that justifies

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studding-sails may change, without premonition, to a gale that will make ribbons of topsails and of storm-sails. The best crew afloat cannot preclude all casualties, or exclude sleepless nights and cold sweats now and then; but a quick eye, a cool head, a prompt hand, and indomitable perseverance, will overcome almost all things.

[This outline of a business life was sketched in the heyday of New England's jobbing history. The number of her jobbers was larger than at any period before or since. Their ambition as a class might be considered to have reached its climax. As a class they were viewed with envy. The good results of a successful business were more evenly diffused than in more recent days. There was competition then, as I have indicated. But the day had not then fully come for the illustration of how a few ambitious men, with unusual facilities, and great capacity for hardness and endurance, could monopolize a business and drive almost all competitors out of it. The best and happiest period for any business, is that in which a competent number of persons dedicated to it may acquire a fair support in its pursuit without injurious toil, without detriment to body or soul, without such oppressive strain as precludes the best cultivation of mind and heart. We live in hope of a day in which the intelligent and well-educated minister may find a way to point out the metes and bounds which define the fields of legitimate labor, whether for body, mind, or heart. It is certain that many, very many business men at present miss the divisions which should enable them to make the most and the best of life. He who would be a useful religious teacher cannot take refuge always in abstract truth; he must know as much as possible of the formative influences which are making the people of his charge what they are. After carefully considering all that may be truly affirmed of the warrant to do a very large business, because of one's finding himself endued with the genius for doing it, it is also to be considered whether any man, however largely endowed with a genius for drawing all the business into his warehouse, has a moral right to do this to the destruction of the livelihood of ten, twenty, or a hundred neighbors. Obviously only one or two in a hundred, or in a thousand, can succeed in this

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modern scheme of monopolizing all the business, by underselling, and so annihilating others. That our Lord Jesus would not countenance any such selfish course, needs no argument. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," begins and ends the argument. His *warning* precedes and follows this: "They that *will be rich*, fall into temptation and a snare, which drown men's souls in destruction and perdition." Said a wealthy merchant to his physician and intimate friend: "No man ever made a million of dollars *honestly*." He had nearly a million and a quarter when he said it.]

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